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Support for police 'zero tolerance'

Clear beggars from streets, says Blair

By JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

TONY BLAIR has backed the use of aggressive policing tactics against homeless petty criminals as part of a drive to clear the streets of beggars, vagrants and people sleeping rough. The Labour leader has also admitted that he never gives money to beggars.

In an interview in this week's *Big Issue*, a magazine distributed by the homeless, Mr Blair supported the "zero tolerance" policy practised in New York where the police clamp down hard on aggressive beggars, graffiti artists, pickpockets and "squeegee merchants" who loiter at traffic lights waiting to wash car windcreens. A similar scheme is being tested at King's Cross, London.

Mr Blair also refused to guarantee homeless people the right to register to vote from day centres, and defended Labour's plans to withhold benefit from unemployed people who fail to take up a series of options.

Jack Straw, the Shadow Home Secretary, has already angered leftwingers by saying that a Labour government would reclaim the streets from "beggars, winos, addicts and squeegee merchants", and yesterday charities that help the homeless greeted Mr Blair's words with some dismay. John Bird, Editor of *The Big Issue*, accused the Labour leader of "a cosmetic exercise to swing round Tony voters" and suggested that the interview was intended to underline new Labour's tough approach to crime and criminals.

The "zero tolerance" scheme, which clamps down on offences that might previously have been considered "low-profile", has led to a 17 per cent reduction in crime in

New York. Asked by *The Big Issue* whether he supported such a policy, Mr Blair replied: "Yes I do. It is important that you say we don't tolerate the small crimes. It says you don't tolerate the graffiti on the wall."

Mr Blair also indicated that he would like to see as many homeless as possible moved off the streets altogether. They should be "dealt with properly, with a roof over their heads" and not shunted from one area to another. But he does not say whether Labour would provide more facilities.

Homeless people could be threatening, and it was important to deal with them, he said. "I often drop my kids off at the Tube and it's actually quite a frightening place for people. I'm saying we do have to make our streets safe for people," he said.

"Obviously some people will interpret this in a way which is harsh and unpleasant, but I think the basic principle is here to say: yes it is right to be intolerant of people homeless on the streets. But the way to deal with that is you make

sure that when those people come off the streets that you're doing the other part of the equation. You're providing them with somewhere to go."

Asked whether he gave money to beggars he said: "I don't. No. I do buy *The Big Issue* occasionally, but I don't put that in the same category."

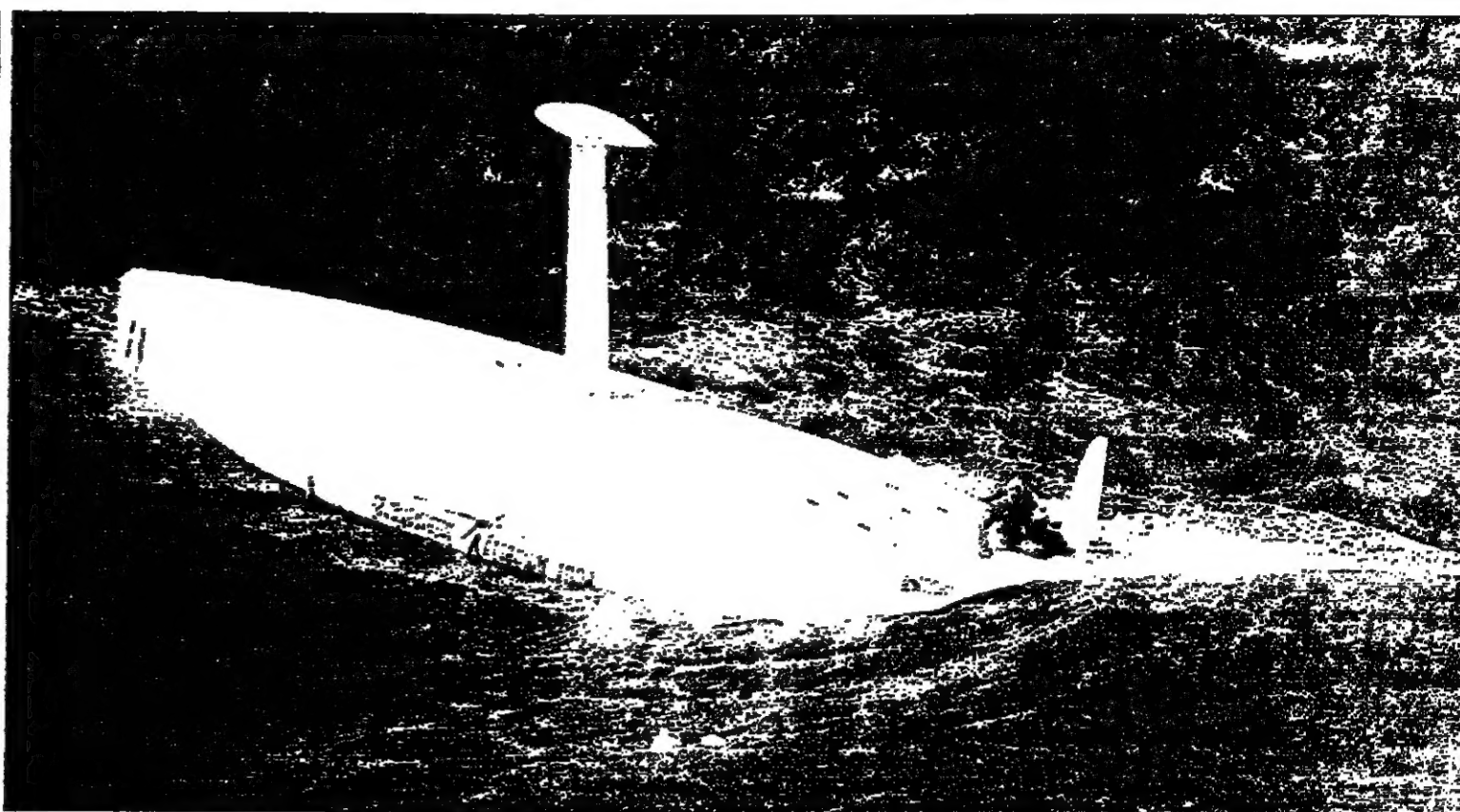
Mr Blair said it was appalling that there were young people sleeping in doorways, and that needed to be tackled but "not by saying this is something we tolerate, we give a pound or two to a beggar whenever we feel like it."

Organisations campaigning for the homeless have long demanded legal changes to make it easier for the homeless to vote. But Mr Blair refused to give any guarantees in this direction. He called for clearer guidelines to stop people registering twice, but did not suggest any changes to the law. "Certainly our intention is to review it in such a way so that, as far as possible, we prevent abuses of the system such as people registering in a number of different locations at the same time."

Charles dealing with homeless people responded cautiously to Mr Blair's remarks. Stephen Bromberg, of Crisis, said: "We need to offer people on the street help with their problems rather than simply putting them out of sight, which is what 'zero tolerance' tends to be about."

A spokeswoman for Shelter said she was glad Mr Blair was addressing the reasons why homelessness exists, but added that "zero tolerance" was an unfortunate phrase which suggested that the homeless might be marginalised and alienated even more.

US crime down, page 10



Thierry Dubois spotted by an Australian aircraft yesterday perched precariously on the upturned hull of his yacht in the Southern Ocean

Hopes rise for missing British sailor

By EDWARD GORMAN AND ROGER MAYNARD

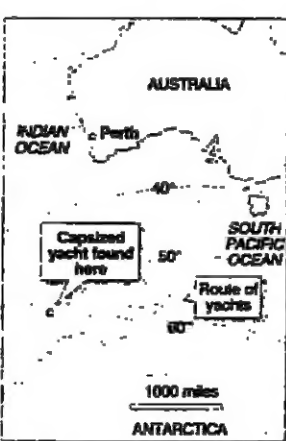
HOPES rose last night for a British solo yachtsman missing in the Southern Ocean after Australian authorities picked up a new manually activated distress signal seeming to confirm that he is alive.

Tony Bullimore, 57, an entrepreneur and experienced racing yachtsman from Bristol, was one of two competitors in the Vendée Globe single-handed non-stop round-the-world race who activated their satellite distress beacons on Sunday, when both yachts were hit by 50-knot winds and heavy seas about 1,400 miles southwest of Perth.

Mahees Alimchandani of the Maritime Rescue Centre in Canberra, which has organised the rescue operation, said: "A beacon has been activated now in an alarm mode. Prior to this, the beacon was activated in what is called a normal mode, which immediately suggests that there is someone there who has changed the switch, probably as an indication that 'Hey, I'm here, and don't write me off'. So we're pretty certain that



Tony Bullimore, left, the British yachtsman who is still unsighted and M Dubois



he's alive." Thierry Dubois, the French skipper, was spotted on the upturned hull of his boat, *Pour Amnesty International*, by a Royal Australian Air Force plane, which dropped him a liferaft. But there was no sign of Mr Bullimore, who originally got into difficulties about ten miles from M Dubois's position.

Mr Bullimore's two-masted 60ft racing yacht, *Endeavour*, is believed to be up-right, but there is no sign of a liferaft. "This could mean that the liferaft has been washed away, or that the British sailor is floating in it," said Colonel Andrew Reynolds of the Australian Defence Forces. "I remain optimistic for him, although obviously he has gone through a lot of trauma."

The priority now is to get to the two men before they are killed by exposure in the freezing conditions. Because they were sailing at the back of the race fleet, there are no other competitors near

enough to help them, and there are no commercial vessels in the area.

The families of the two men are pinning their hopes on an Australian naval frigate, *HMS Adelaide*, which set off from Perth yesterday but will not be within range with its Seahawk helicopter before tomorrow morning at the earliest.

Laliet, Mr Bullimore's Jamaican-born wife, said that not knowing if her husband had survived was agonising. "I'm obviously very upset. It is very worrying not knowing — all I can do is sit and wait by the phone."

His nephew, Stephen Mulvaney, said the past 48 hours had been "absolute hell" for all the family. "But if anyone can survive this, Tony can," he said of the former Royal Marine, who is regarded as exceptionally tough and tenacious. "We just hope that Tony has decided to stay in the boat and will be picked up when the rescue boat arrives," he said.

Conditions in the immediate area of the two yachtsmen yesterday were still very poor, with winds continuing at near-hurricane force and a very rough sea.

Roaring Forties, page 2

Adams warning
Gerry Adams said that Northern Ireland was facing dangerous times after terrorists fired a grenade at a security post outside Belfast High Court. An RUC officer was treated in hospital for minor injuries after the attack yesterday morning. **Page 2**

Woolwich bonus
More than 2.5 million members of the Woolwich will receive free shares worth an average of £1,200 if they vote to convert the building society into a bank. The shares will be priced at between £7p and 20p, putting a market value on the Woolwich of between £2.96 billion and £3.38 billion. **Page 23**

Dutch seek a Euro-truce

By CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS AND ARTHUR LEATHLEY

THE Dutch Government will seek assurances from John Major today that Britain's general election campaign will not stand in the way of efforts to reshape the European Union.

Wim Kok, the Dutch Prime Minister, has responded to increasing British resistance to EU changes by making a private meeting with Mr Major his first priority on the day his country formally takes over the presidency. A new treaty taking the EU into the next century is due to be signed in Amsterdam in June.

Mr Kok voiced fears yesterday that plans to change the European Union could become a "football" during the coming election campaign and he said that he would appeal to Mr Major to take a positive attitude to Europe. However, Mr Major is expected to use tonight's private dinner in The Hague to make clear that Britain will not bow to pressure to agree to a new treaty without receiving assurances over policies that it has opposed.

The Prime Minister will repeat his insistence that Europe should back down from its demands over the

introduction of a 48-hour working week before Britain co-operates with fundamental changes to the Maastricht treaty. He also plans to underline Britain's opposition to the fisheries policy, which has permitted foreign fleets to raid British stocks by "quota hopping".

British officials made plain last night there would be no softening in Britain's position from the line taken at the Dublin summit last month, when Mr Major insisted that he would not sign up to a new treaty unless he secured

Continued on page 2, col 1

Clifford announces anti-Tory vendetta

By JOANNA BAILE

MAX CLIFFORD, the publicist who orchestrated the disclosure of allegations that the Conservative MP Jerry Hayes had an illegal homosexual affair with a teenager, admitted yesterday that he was waging a "personal vendetta" against the Government.

He said he hoped to bring more sleaze allegations against the Tories before the election, adding: "In a new year and in the run up to a general election, it is important to remind the British

public of the Conservative Party's real values."

He was speaking as members of Mr Hayes's constituency association in Harlow, Essex, urged the MP to sue *The News of the World* over the allegations or resign.

Mr Clifford is a Labour supporter and a longstanding critic of the Government's health policies. He has a severely disabled daughter.

Continued on page 2, col 4

Letters, page 17

Buzz and Elmo toy with 'R' profits

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

SELLING the wrong toy in the wrong place made it a dismal Christmas for Toys 'R' Us, the world's largest toy chain.

While British parents scoured empty shelves for Buzz Lightyear, the dynamic character from the film *Toy Story*, desperate American parents paid hundreds of dollars on the black market for a fluffy doll from *Sesame Street*, called Tickles Me Elmo. Meanwhile, Toys 'R' Us was left with a surplus of Buzz in America and a glut of Elmo in Britain.

Yesterday the company was forced to disappoint investors by announcing no increase in toy sales over the crucial

holiday season. The news caused its shares to slide on Wall Street by \$5.25 (more than £3) to \$25.50.

The company explained away the toy families as not so much a failure to get the right toys in the right place as an industry swamped by demand. "We thought the dolls would be popular but we didn't anticipate how Buzz would fly out the door in Britain," said Lou Lipschitz, chief financial officer for Toys 'R' Us. "It was a problem of manufacturers not being able to gear up fast enough to meet the demand."

The disappointing sales performance by Toys 'R' Us reflects a generally unimpressive Christmas season for most of the American retail industry. Many

companies blamed the late arrival of Thanksgiving last year which cut down the number of shopping days in the intervening days up to Christmas. Mr Lipschitz also said that there had been few very exciting new toys to encourage sales over the holiday season.

However, it seems that despite strong economic conditions in both Britain and America, consumers are still cautious about spending their money. Toy industry executives said they thought many people had been waiting for special price promotions which, in the event, were never offered. Comparing store for store sales with last year, Toys 'R' Us sales did not change in the eight weeks to the end of 1996.



"Admit it, Dad. You could have been more generous with our Christmas presents"

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Blair accuses Tories of negative tactics in 'all end in tears' campaign

By JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

TONY BLAIR accused the Tories of negative advertising yesterday as they launched the first round of a multi-million-pound pre-election publicity campaign. The Labour leader said it was sad if the Tories had nothing better to do than spend millions making things up about his party.

Brian Mawhinney, the Tory party chairman, unveiled five new advertisements that will be put up on

3,000 poster sites across the country over the next three weeks. Under the title "It Would All End In Tears", the emotive campaign attempts to paint a bleak picture of what the Tories believe life would be like under Labour.

The posters depict people looking unhappy and shedding red tears as they suffer without the Tories in government. The five slogans are: "New Labour, New Failure"; "New Labour, New Taxes";



Dr Mawhinney unveiling the posters yesterday

"New Labour, New Job Losses"; "New Labour, New Price Rises"; and "New Labour, New Mortgage Risk".

Mr Blair said: "I think it is really sad that the Conservatives have nothing better to do than waste £7 million or what-

ever it is on a negative advertising campaign, making things up about the Labour Party. This country wants to have some chance of hope and opportunity in the future, not just see the parties scrapping with each other in negative advertising."

Dr Mawhinney denied that the posters were negative and insisted that Labour's policies threatened the economy and the stability and prosperity of millions of families. "Tell me what is negative in reminding people that new jobs are

being created, that unemployment is falling and taxes are going down, and all that will be put at risk by a Labour Government," he said.

The Tories also published a 28-page dossier, entitled *New Labour: It Would All End In Tears*, which repeated the Tory charge that Labour has at least 89 spending commitments that ministers claim would cost £30 billion.

Professional reaction to the posters in the advertising industry was mixed. Martin Smith, managing director of

Bartle Bogle Hegarty, said the advertisement was not clear and would raise too many questions in voters' minds. They were just as likely to assume that the people looking unhappy in the advertisement were living under a Tory Government as a Labour one. He said voters would think, "Things are bad now. Why should I believe that it could be any worse under Labour?"

Mr Smith was also critical of the negative nature of the campaign. "Simply saying the

other guys stink is not a good way of advertising."

Simon Clemmow, planning director of Simons Palmer, liked the slogan "It Will All End In Tears". Like the Tony Blair "demon eyes" campaign, it captured something that people felt. "You are preying on the fears about what will happen after the election," he said. But he believed most people would not understand why the posters contained a red tear if the "It Will All End In Tears" line was not used in them.

Adams says attack on court heralds return to danger

By NICHOLAS WATT, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

GERRY ADAMS said last night that Northern Ireland faced dangerous times after terrorists fired a grenade at a security post outside Belfast High Court.

As the IRA admitted responsibility for the city centre attack, the Sinn Féin president gave a warning that the "genie is now out of the bottle".

An RUC officer was treated in hospital for minor injuries after terrorists in a car launched an improvised grenade at a security post outside the court. The officer, who dived for cover when he saw the weapon being fired, was protected by the hut's bullet-proof glass.

Mr Adams said at a press conference in Belfast a few hours after the attack: "The genie in many ways is back out of the bottle. I want to see that rectified. I think we will

still be able, when all of the main players focus their attention, to bring about a negotiated settlement. In the meantime we are living once again in dangerous times."

After the attack, just after midday yesterday, the terrorists abandoned their car in the republican Markets area, close to the court, where they had hijacked the vehicle earlier in the day. Detectives later discovered the remains of the home-made device, which is fired from a 20in launcher from the shoulder, in the burnt-out Ford Mondeo.

This type of grenade has killed scores of police officers and soldiers during the Troubles. One of the last police officers to die before the 1994 ceasefire was killed when terrorists fired one at an RUC Land Rover yards from the scene of yesterday's attack.

The IRA also claimed yesterday that it had left bombs at six locations, including four hotels, across the city. These turned out to be hoaxes.

Chief Superintendent Victor Hutchinson, the RUC's deputy sub-divisional commander in Belfast city centre, condemned the attack on the court as callous. He said: "This area is very busy and the courts were in operation at the time. Members of the public were put at risk. We are very thankful that more people were not injured."

The attack was condemned across the political spectrum. Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, described the attack as an outrage and said that it reinforced Sinn Féin's exclusion from the Stormont talks. He added: "Let me make it clear that the blackmailing power of violence is not going to work. The familiar terrorist combination of hard deeds and honeyed words won't wash."

Peter Robinson, the deputy leader of the Democratic Unionists, said that the attack was an attempt to provoke loyalist terrorists. Gary McMichael, leader of the Ulster Democratic Party, the political wing of the Ulster Freedom Fighters, accused the IRA of attempting to drag Northern Ireland back into conflict.

But Mr McMichael said that the UFF was still committed to its ceasefire. He said: "I have been speaking with the Ulster Freedom Fighters and they have assured me that they remain committed to keeping the peace process alive. However, I think there is a feeling of despondency by the fact that the IRA appear to be intent upon dragging all the people of Northern Ireland back into a conflict situation."



Max Clifford, left, and Paul Stone arriving for a radio interview about their allegations against a Tory MP

Clifford tells of anti-Tory vendetta

Continued from page 1
who needs regular hospital treatment for her rheumatoid arthritis. "It is a personal vendetta based on what they have done to the NHS," he said. "The death and suffering they have caused to so many ordinary people in this country is something I have watched with growing despair and anger."

But Labour swiftly disowned Mr Clifford and attacked Conservative MPs for suggesting that it might approve of him. The Colchester North MP, Bernard Jenkin, had challenged Labour to distance itself from the "extremely disasteful" Mr Clifford and Roger Gale, chairman of the Tory backbench media committee, had said: "We knew this was going to be a dirty election, but

I don't think that is what the public were expecting from the goody, Godly Mr Blair."

But a Labour spokesman said: "The suggestion from Tory MPs that the Labour Party in any way approves of Mr Clifford's involvement in this issue shows that they are indulging in gutter politics themselves."

"We totally condemn what Mr Clifford has done and the threat that he has made today and will continue to make that clear. Throughout the 'back-to-basics' debate, the Labour party never once sought to make any political capital out of the many scandals. We have no intention of starting now."

Mr Stone said that he had given the Harlow MP an ultimatum to leave his wife, "but he said to me basically 'For the sake of my career, I can't leave my wife'."

Mr Hayes, who has been married for 17 years, has denied Mr Stone's allegations, but senior members of his constituency association said yesterday that they would find it hard to believe the denials unless he issued a writ.

Leslie Atkins, vice-president

of the association, said: "If I was him, the first thing I would do would be to take a writ out and sue. If he declines to do this, I would judge my assessment of the situation on that. I would have doubts that he was telling the truth. If we came to the conclusion that he had this affair, then we would ask him to resign."

Philip Weales, an association member and former treasurer, said: "I still hope it's not true, but if, after talking to him, we decide that it is, then he should resign. I also feel strongly that if illegal acts have taken place then he should be prosecuted." The legal age of consent for homosexuals was 21 when Mr Stone alleges the affair took place.

Mr Hayes and his family were at a secret location yesterday.

Tory MP will join rivals for talks on reform

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

A SENIOR Tory MP yesterday compromised John Major's warnings about the constitutional reform plans of the Opposition parties by announcing that he was ready to join their talks.

Hugh Dykes, MP for Harrow East, said that an all-party approach could be fully justified. In a letter to the Shadow Home Secretary, Jack Straw, he accepted an invitation to a meeting of the Liberal Democrat-Labour joint consultative committee and said he wished to concentrate on issues such as voting systems and reform of the Lords.

Mr Major, on a tour of Yorkshire, shrugged off Mr Dykes's intervention, saying that the MP had spoken as an "independent backbencher".

Labour was delighted. Mr Straw has been in talks with Mr Dykes for several months and they agreed to make public an exchange of letters. But the timing of the release, the day after Mr Major had hit out fiercely at the Opposition plans, irritated the Tory high command. In Leeds the Prime Minister said that the Opposition plans could lead to a social democratic society through "deliberate gerrymandering".

Today Mr Major will hold the first of his presidential-style press conferences at Conservative Central Office before a trip to The Netherlands and his tour of India and Pakistan. The former Tory MP Sir Frederick Bennett says in a pamphlet that the Government risks a rout under the present "outdated" electoral system. He tells Tory candidates to recall "the result of the last general election in Canada: 150 Conservative MPs before, two after, under a first-past-the-post system".

EU truce

Continued from page 1
satisfaction on the 48-hour working week on "quota-hopping".

"Our priority is to campaign for Britain's interests within Europe and we will continue to do that," a senior aide said. The two leaders are anxious that relations between the two countries may become increasingly strained during a general election campaign that coincides with a presidency held by one of the most integrationist EU nations.

Dutch leaders yesterday made clear their nervousness over Britain's stance in the coming months, during which they hope to secure agreement on wide-ranging changes to bring about a more flexible union. The Dutch indicated the biggest headache in a presidency that faces the task of producing a new treaty within weeks of the likely British election date.

The EU wants the treaty finished in order to clear the decks for monetary union in two years' time and to allow the start of negotiations with future members from central Europe. Mr Kok emphasised that he was not attempting to interfere in the British general election, mindful of the controversy caused last week when Klaus Kinkel, the German Foreign Minister, called on Britain to make its European position clear during the election campaign.

The Dutch presidency will be launched today at a formal meeting with Jacques Santer and the full EU Commission.

Ashdown seeks food-safety monitor as CJD toll hits 15

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

PADDY ASHDOWN called last night for the creation of an independent body to monitor food safety and dispel a "climate of fear" among consumers after the beef crisis.

The call by the Liberal Democrat leader came as the Department of Health confirmed that a total of 15 people were so far believed to have fallen victim to a strain of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease linked to eating BSE-infected beef. The latest is thought to have been Victoria Lowther, 19, a hotelier's daughter from Carlisle, who died in November.

Mr Ashdown accused the Government of relying too much for scientific guidance on advisers with commercial links, and of failing to take prompt precautionary action against risks to health and the environment. Speaking at a dinner at the annual Oxford Farming Conference, Mr Ashdown said: "What we need is a stand-alone, independent commission which, like the Audit Commission, reports to Parliament, not ministers, and is strong enough to fight its corner in the marketplace. The respon-

sibility for food safety, upon which the farmer and consumer depend, cannot any longer be left to the multinational food processors and the chemical giants and supermarkets."

Citing the recent arrival on supermarket shelves of products containing genetically engineered soya, but with no mention of that on their labels, Mr Ashdown said consumers, like farmers, were being left powerless and bewildered.

Mr Ashdown said the lesson of "mad cow" disease,



Victoria Lowther: suspected victim

which was second only to the poll tax as the "worst and most expensive administrative fiasco" in the 17 years of Tory rule, was that farmers had to team up with consumers to win back control of their markets from "the multinationals, the mega-marketers and the politicians" by demanding more information and tougher safety standards.

Labour has said it will set up an independent food body if it wins power.

The Department of Health would not confirm yesterday that the fifteenth CJD case was Miss Lowther, although reports last month suggested her death was caused by the strain, which affects the young. A department spokeswoman said: "We never discuss individual cases."

The latest monthly figures show the number of referrals to the national CJD surveillance centre in Edinburgh in 1996 was 111 to the end of November, the highest since 1990. On past experience, about half will turn out to be genuine CJD cases, mostly of the "sporadic" form, which mainly hits older people and is not linked with beef.

Churches defiant over jobs report

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

CHURCH leaders are defying pressure to delay publication of a report that gives warning of the social dangers caused by job insecurity and "humiliatingly low pay". They say politicians have failed to take the issue seriously.

The churches plan to publish *Unemployment and the Future of Work* in April, which is likely to coincide with the general election campaign. If the election is brought forward to March, senior Church figures suggest that the report's publication could be brought forward for greatest impact.

The ecumenical report, the result of an 18-month inquiry, will give warning of risks caused by low pay, lack of job security and high unemployment levels. The authors, members of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, criticise the "casualisation" of labour, under which employers have increasingly offered short-term contracts.

The report's timing will add to the growing feeling among ministers that Church leaders are taking an increasingly political stance in the run-up to the general election. Ann

Widdicombe, the Home Office Minister, last week complained that the Church of England was showing political bias in criticising the Government over moral issues.

The Right Rev David Sheppard, Bishop of Liverpool, who is leading the unemployment inquiry, set the tone for the report last week by writing: "Top of our nation's agenda ought to be providing proper jobs... We have become fatalistic, assuming that nothing can be done about mass unemployment and humiliatingly low pay."

Although the Church leaders deny that the report is intended to criticise any particular party, it is expected to counter Tory claims over reduced unemployment levels by questioning the quality of work that jobless people are able to obtain.

A decision on the publication date is to be made next month but a Church of England figure said: "There is clearly going to be more interest in this subject before the election than afterwards, and there is no point in wasting this work."

Labour consults on plan for preventing strikes

Labour Party leaders are to consult employers' bodies, companies and trade unions on measures aimed at preventing and resolving industrial disputes. The move, which comes after informal meetings with a range of business and union leaders, will centre on early conciliation and arbitration, proposals that have found particular favour, especially with employers.

Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, is already consulting on his proposals to prevent strikes by providing for the courts to decide on a new test of whether strikes are disproportionate in terms of their impact on business and the public.

Banker fined over heroin

A member of the Rothschild banking dynasty yesterday admitted possession of heroin after Customs officers searched his luggage as he prepared to fly home to Switzerland on Sunday. Benjamin de Rothschild, a millionaire banker, was fined £400 with £50 costs by magistrates in Southampton. The court was told that 8.9 grams of the drug had been found. De Rothschild, 33, is a registered heroin addict.

Priest pocketed charity cash

A clergyman who plundered more than £50,000 from church funds, including £40,000 donated by Comic Relief, was jailed for 12 months. The Rev Martyn Davis, 37, stole the money to settle credit-card debts while he was working as a youth officer in the Peterborough diocese. He applied for charity grants for projects but kept the money.

60-mile hunt for hospital bed

A critically ill woman was driven 60 miles by ambulance after two hospitals were unable to find her a bed. Edna Harrison, 54, finally arrived at Hull Royal Infirmary to take up the only available intensive care bed in Yorkshire four hours after she had a heart attack at her home in Leeds. Her condition last night was described as poorly but stable.

Jail siege ends peacefully

A siege at Glenochil prison, Clackmannan, ended peacefully 19 hours after it began when a nurse and a prison officer were released after being taken hostage by three prisoners who reportedly made no demands. In Dublin, six prisoners holding four officers at Mountjoy jail for three days were given supplies of a heroin substitute to calm the situation.

After the freeze, the flood

Flooding caused many schools and large buildings to remain closed after the holiday yesterday. In Devon and Cornwall 60 schools were closed because of frozen or burst pipes. Cambridge Water has been repairing four times the usual number of burst mains. At least 16 people are known to have died as a result of the cold spell. Forecast, page 22

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By EDWARD GORMAN, SAILING CORRESPONDENT

THE Southern Ocean, where Tony Bullimore and Thierry Dubois are fighting for their lives, is one of the most inhospitable places on Earth. In the Roaring Forties and Furious Fifties, the latitudes that border Antarctica, the winds nearly always blow at gale force and hurricane conditions are not uncommon.

Yachtsmen also have to contend with bitter cold, even in the summer months. Paul Standbridge, an interna-

tional racing yachtsman who has sailed the Southern Ocean five times in Whitbread races, believes the cold will be the biggest danger for the two yachtsmen as they wait for an Australian navy frigate to reach them. "People have survived 110 days in the Pacific, but where they are, the cold will kill them. They won't have time to die of hunger."

For yachtsmen, especially singlehanded like Mr Bullimore and M Dubois, the demands of the Southern Ocean are immense. The winds circling the globe, unhindered by

intervening land masses, create huge wave formations which also circle without obstruction, except at the notorious Cape Horn where they are squeezed through the narrow gap between the tip of South America and the Antarctic.

Sailing west-to-east, as they were doing, can be exhilarating as boats surf down huge waves with the wind generally behind them. But the risks are high if a boat gets out of control, especially when skippers are asleep and relying on their autopilots. It is not yet known what problems beset Mr

Bullimore's 60ft *Exide Challenger* and M Dubois's *Amnesty International*. One explanation is that the boats were rolled by a "rogue wave", a massive wall of water breaking dangerously as it passed underneath the yachts. Mr Standbridge said: "All waves are rogues in those latitudes."

Another possibility is that one of the yachts may have made an involuntary tack, which could result in water ballast, weighing up to five tonnes, moving to the wrong side of the boat which could cause it to be swamped in a rough sea.

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LOTTERIES CONTRIBUTING MOST TO GOOD CAUSES AND GOVERNMENT DUTY TAXES*

1. The National Lottery (UK)	£2.3 billion
2. Dai-ichi Kangyo Bank Lottery (Japan)	£2.1 billion
3. ONLAE (Spain)	£1.6 billion
4. La Française des Jeux (France)	£1.0 billion

*Source: La Fleur's Lottery World, The Worldwide Lottery Efficiency Study 1996, based on the top 30 lotteries worldwide ranked by govt. profit.

As you can see from the above table, Camelot raises more for Good Causes and government than any other lottery operator in the world. And it hasn't just happened by chance. It's because we create simple and exciting games that people want to play—the Saturday game has already become a national institution. Our choice of retailers ensures

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هكذا من الأصل

Hot air and fervent prayer fuel renewed attempt to float around the world in 18 days

Branson's balloon hopes fly high as weather clears

FROM ANDREW PIERCE IN MARRAKESH

PRAYERS were said in Morocco's mosques last night seeking spiritual guidance for Richard Branson on the eve of his pioneering attempt to circumnavigate the globe in a balloon. He was due finally to take off this morning if the skies above Marrakesh remain clear.

Bad weather, which has repeatedly delayed the expedition, cleared yesterday. Local weathermen gave approval for a launch from 8am onwards, provided that ground wind speeds remained below 5 knots. The launch site is in the same time zone as Britain.

Mr Branson is in a three-way race to become the first to complete the 16,000-mile voyage non-stop in 18 days. American and Belgian crews plan to be in the air at the same time.

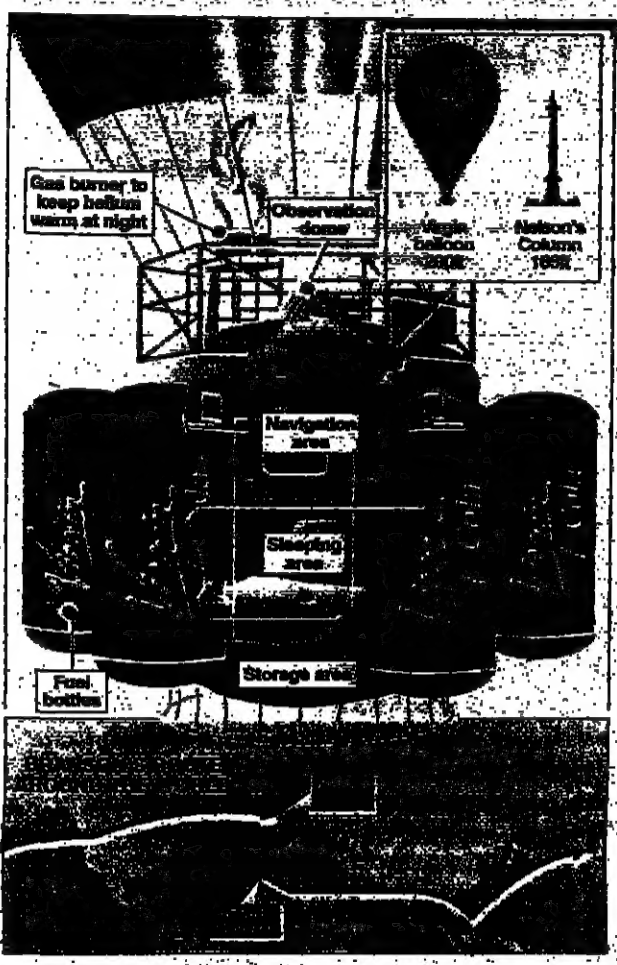
Only hours before take-off, final fitness tests were being carried out on Rory McCarthy, 36, who was chosen from 1,000 applicants to be the third crew member on Virgin Global Challenger. Mr McCarthy, a businessman who holds the record for sky diving at altitude, is suffering from bronchitis and has developed fluid on the lung.

Mr Branson, 46, who arrived in Marrakesh on Sunday night, said: "We are worried about Rory. He is not well. But the underbirds will not delay the launch for him. We have only one window of opportunity. But it is Rory's decision. We are not worried about any risks of infection. There are far greater risks to worry about."

Mr Branson's mission has caused him to rewrite his will for the seventh time. The hundred-page document, which he has taken to Morocco, contains details of the 200 companies in the billion-pound Virgin empire in the event of his death in the Challenger. The launch will be witnessed by his wife, Joan, and their children, Holly and Sam.

A "key man" insurance policy has been taken out on Mr Branson for the flight by his group's parent company. The premium costs £150,000 and would provide an estimated £30 million payout.

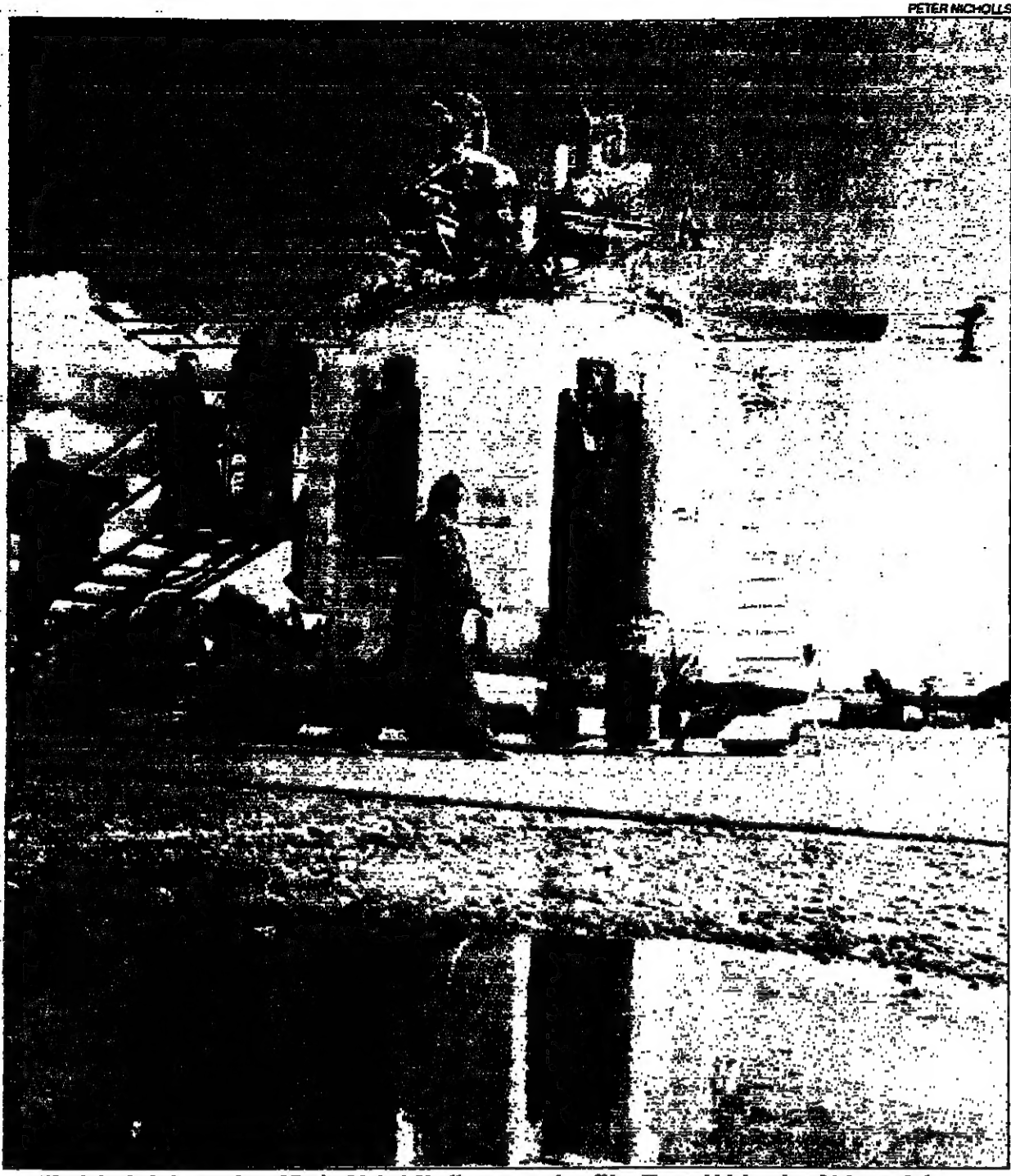
Confidence is so high in the Virgin camp that Mr Branson tried yesterday to place a £500,000 bet at 2-1 on winning the race, which will be fought out at an average altitude of 30,000 feet. Mr Branson announced that he would have donated his winnings to charity but Ladbrokes rejected his wager.



Mr Branson said at the launch site, an RAF base at Marrakesh: "We are at the mercy of the wind. The Global Challenger is very much an experimental craft. I know there are dangers. But the lure of completing the world's last great aviation challenge was too hard to resist."

The Challenger weighs 11.5 tons when loaded, its height of 200ft at take-off makes it taller than Nelson's Column, and it will fly at up to 250mph. The balloon was designed by Per Lindstrand, 46, who is the second co-pilot.

The three men will take turns to sleep in eight-hour cycles in the solitary bed in the two-storey capsule. Food packs have been prepared which avoid high-fibre products. Champagne and caviar have been included in Mr Branson's hamper.



Final checks being made on Virgin Global Challenger: at take-off it will stand higher than Nelson's Column



McCarthy: bronchitis

- ### LAUNCH COUNTDOWN
- Monday January 6
5pm: Envelope unfurled at launch site.
8pm: 1.1 million cubic feet of helium gas pumped into balloon.
- Tuesday January 7
6am: Helium pumping operation complete.
6.30am: Attach capsule to ground launch pad with explosive bolts.
7am: Attach six propane gas tanks to capsule to provide lighting, electricity and pressurisation system for capsule.
7.30am: Three pilot/venter capsule to begin final systems tests.
8.30am: Planned launch time.
- Once helium is pumped into balloon the Virgin Global Challenger has only 72 hours in which it can be launched.



Branson: worried

Christian TV station runs out of cash for 'stoic' staff

By ALEXANDRA FREAN
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S first mainstream Christian cable television station is facing collapse before it even reaches the screen after failing to raise sufficient cash from donors and investors.

ARK2, which had promised that it would "feed the human spirit" with quality Christian soaps, chat shows and moral debate, confirmed yesterday that all 32 staff at its headquarters in Bristol had been given notice. They were told that the company could not afford to pay their wages for December.

Alan Rogers, a director, said that the company had run up debts and been forced to put its operations on hold. He added: "The staff are being very stoic about it."

The company, which was created in 1995, raised about £1.8 million from churches, trusts, individuals and Christian businessmen and was scheduled to go on air last October. The launch was postponed several times.

One of the company's creditors, who asked not to be named, said: "We have done quite a lot of work for them and they owe us quite a lot of money."

"In this climate of high moral debate, it is ironic that no money could be found to pay for a television station offering to air that debate."

Mr Rogers said he was confident that the company would be able to re-employ its staff and begin running again. The current difficulties had arisen because payment for its first production contract, with a South African station, had been delayed by foreign-exchange controls.

He said: "That payment is worth £300,000. When it comes through, my hope is that we will be back in business."

Mr Rogers blamed internal restructuring and reorganisation of leading cable companies for their failure to agree deals with ARK2 but he forecast successful talks before the autumn, when cable television would offer up to 200 channels. He said ARK2 was also actively pursuing contracts in Europe.

Cafe plan in Mall arch

By MARCUS BINNET

A RESTAURANT with one of the finest views in London could soon be installed in Admiralty Arch. Roger Freeman, the Public Service Minister, said yesterday that he was extending the search for a new role for the building to include public uses of many kinds.

The issue before ministers is whether the empty arch should be used mainly as public or private sector offices, or be made accessible to the public, including the thousands of tourists who throng Trafalgar Square on one side and The Mall on the other.

The Times has proposed that the space over the arch should become a brasserie-style cafe, restaurant and Mr Freeman said yesterday: "This is certainly a possibility we are considering."

Prince slopes home to TV sport he can happily shun

By ALAN HAMILTON

THE Prince of Wales will return from his skiing holiday in Klosters tonight just in time to switch on ITV's much-trumpeted live debate on the future of the monarchy, in which actors from *EastEnders* will trade constitutional niceties with a former Rolling Stone. The heir to the throne, however, is likely to find better things to do.

He may have seen that a MORI opinion poll conducted for the programme gives him the thumbs-down. But he may also note the absence of any serious constitutional experts or supporters of monarchy from the panel: Lord Blake, Vernon Bogdanor and Lord St John of Fawsley have given way to the motor racing commentator Murray Walker, the publicist Max Clifford and the javelin thrower Tessa Sanderson.

The debate is at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham, also the venue for the Saturday evening entertainment provided by *Gladiators*. It has generated curious publicity, possibly explained by its screening in the dog-end days of the early new year, when nothing much real happens. Yesterday the *Daily Mirror*, freshly revamped as *The Mirror*, quoted at length an unnamed source on how sorry the Prince was that he had let down the Queen, the Princess of Wales, his children and Camilla Parker Bowles over his divorce.

The Prince, the newspaper said, was ready to make a fresh start and pursue a more positive life in future. Mention of the word "relaunch" to his senior aides yesterday caused them to cringe and to wail. "He is not relaunching himself: he is carrying on just as before," one of his staff said.

There is, nevertheless, a subtle shift in the way the Prince is being sold to his public. He had a good week on the Swiss ski slopes with Prince Harry, and enjoyed an unusually mannerly and civilised relationship with the attendant press corps, which left him alone in return for one photo-opportunity each morning.

"The explanation is simple," one seasoned royal reporter said. "He's not as interesting as he used to be, especially when he hasn't got Prince William with him."

The Prince's relations with the press remain strained. During a recent nine-day tour of Central Asian republics, he did not exchange a single word with the six reporters who accompanied him.

But there is more to it than that. A new regime is in place at St James's Palace. Now the Prince's public life is directed by Stephen Lempert, his new private secretary and an old Foreign Office hand, and Mark Bolland, a new assistant private secretary who understands the wily ways of the media from his previous job as secretary of the Press Complaints Commission.

Staff hope that, with the divorce well out of the way, the media will concentrate on the positive aspects of the Prince's working life. One of his senior aides said yesterday: "The Prince's standing in public esteem has declined in the last five years, but if he gets it right in the next five he will recover his popularity."



Novel formula: Murray Walker and the Prince



Derek Humphry's book, *Final Edit: The Practicalities of Self-Deliverance and Assisted Suicide for the Dying* (article, January 3), has never been banned in the United Kingdom, and has been freely available through book trade channels since 1991.

□ A report (December 30) referred to unsubstantiated rumours that Imran Khan and his political party in Pakistan, the Movement for Justice, had received substantial campaign funds from his father-in-law, Sir James Goldsmith. Mr Khan has asked us to make clear that he has not received any such financial support.

The essential guide to gannin' doon toon

By ROBIN YOUNG

PARTY city, according to the British Tourist Authority, is Newcastle upon Tyne. To celebrate the fact, it has published a Geordie phrase book to help visiting foreign tourists.

The book, part of *UK The Guide*, a magazine aimed at the international youth market, starts by explaining that on Tyneside "aye" means "yes" and "why-aye" means "definitely yes". With phonetics that could prove more of a hindrance than a help to tourists, there

then follow explanations for "ho'way man" (rendered as "watch what you are doing"), "wor lass" ("my lady friend") and "wor lad" ("my beau"). "Toon" means Newcastle, and "Toon army" refers to the followers of Newcastle United.

Advance students are taught to distinguish between "bugger off man" (translated as "please go away") and "why-ye bugger man" (which foreigners are asked to accept as the local alternative for "good gracious me").

Finally, the phrase book suggests readers might like to use the guide to

construct sentences of their own. "For example, if contemplating an evening out with friends," *UK The Guide* suggests helpfully, "you could say: 'Why-ye bugger man! I'm gannin' doon toon to get mortal drunk and find some tottie.'"

This is said to be the equivalent of "Good gracious me. I am going into Newcastle to get one too many drinks and find some desirable young lady."

UK The Guide is published in five languages and circulated through all the BTA's offices abroad. It is not available in Britain.

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INVESTMENTS

ENO seeks cash for new home, five years after Coliseum handout

By DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

THE English National Opera is planning to move out of the London Coliseum and into a new theatre that it hopes to build at a cost of up to £120 million. Eight sites in north, south and west London are being considered.

The company will seek 75 per cent of the costs from the National Lottery, just five years after the Government awarded it £10.5 million to buy the Coliseum's freehold. Yesterday the Tory MP

David Mellor condemned the decision as an "outrageous breach of faith". As Chief Secretary to the Treasury, he responded to the company's pleas for a special grant on the understanding that it would finance the refurbishment.

Dennis Marks, the company's general director, vigorously defended himself against the suggestion that another London opera house was seeking lottery money just after the Royal Opera House received a £78 million grant. He said that more than a tenth of the English National Opera's regular

audience came from beyond the South East and that the company hoped eventually to tour. He also rejected the argument that it was less likely to attract audiences to some "god-forsaken" place than to central London.

The decision to move was made after a year-long feasibility study: a new building was seen as the only way to secure the company's future, saving an estimated £1 million in annual running costs. To stay at the Coliseum would mean modernising technical facilities and improving accessibility, among

other work. The cost would be £50 million, plus "at least" £20 million for relocating the company during the two-year renovation.

The proposed new theatre would have perhaps two auditoriums, one of 2,100 seats for large-scale opera and dance, and a smaller, flexible 900-seater for more intimate productions.

Mr Mellor, whose disillusionment with the company led him to resign from its board two years ago, said: "It is an outrageous breach of faith for the ENO to abandon the Coliseum only five

years after going down on bended knee to the Government to ask to be given the freehold. This was done on the understanding that they would find the money for the refurbishment themselves. There has never been any sign that they were able to do so, so it's pie in the sky to think they could raise the millions for a new theatre."

He added: "ENO has many fundamental artistic problems to confront, not least whether there is a future in an increasingly sophisticated society for opera in Eng-

lish. Artistically, the house is not going through a good period. To try to get the lottery to pay for a new opera house is pure escapism, when they should be tackling these other fundamental problems."

"The Coliseum is a terrific theatre, wonderfully placed in the heart of London with great acoustics and splendid sight-lines. If they can't fill the Coliseum — and they can't — how on earth could they fill some new white elephant stuck out in King's Cross?"

John Allison, assistant editor of *Opera* magazine, also expressed

concern about the plans, particularly in the light of the controversies over the Royal Opera House and the Cardiff opera house, whose lottery application was rejected. "There are lessons to be learned from the Cardiff experience. The fact that Cardiff didn't succeed suggests bad feelings towards an opera house, from tabloid opinion to government. If Cardiff succeeds this time, they will probably do so without the dread word 'opera' in their title."

Richard Morrison, page 3

Greatest hits albums head Crossover Top 50

Classical 'easy listening' gets a chart of its own

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

MUSIC that is neither pure pop nor truly classical was recognised as a genre in its own right yesterday with the publication of the first Top 50 chart of "crossover" albums.

Compilations of favourite classical tunes, film soundtracks and the Three Tenors — José Carreras, Plácido Domingo and Luciano Pavarotti — in concert feature in the new listing, which aims to establish harmony in the music world after discord over the old classical chart. Compiled by Chart Information Network, it includes non-traditional interpretations of classical works, classical-style soundtracks and compilations of extracts of classical works.

Six of the top ten are compilations by various artists. At No 1 is an album of arias called *The Best Opera Album in the World... Ever!* — the latest in a series covering musical genres from punk to love ballads.

The crossover chart will cater for classical performers who want to go for the middle-brow and popular per-



Faithfull and Garrett: albums kept off classical chart

formers seeking a more sophisticated market. It also allows customers of traditional classical recordings to study a specialist chart uncluttered by the compilations that currently swamp the market.

"Until five years ago it was very easy to know what went into the classical chart. But with the advent of Classic FM there has been a lot of concentration on the more accessible end of the classical market and the traditional classical

market has stagnated," Catherine Pusey, CIN's charts director, said. "The chart was not helping to introduce anyone to traditional classical recordings."

The new chart was conceived after certain work by performers such as the soprano Lesley Garrett, the rock chanteuse Marianne Faithfull and the guitarist John Williams was excluded from the classical chart. Garrett, of the English Na-

tional Opera, who tours large venues with repertoire including lighter music, found that her album *Soprano in Hollywood* languished at No 57 in the pop chart after it was ruled ineligible for the classical chart, which it would have topped. "It was not being judged against its peers," she said. "Instead I was being compared to Blur and Oasis, which made no sense at all."

The album has entered the crossover chart at No 11. Faithfull complained when her album of Kurt Weill songs, *20th Century Blues*, was kept off the classical chart and Williams was annoyed when his recording *John Williams Plays The Movies*, mainly comprising film themes but containing an album of classical music, was excluded. Williams is at No 12 in the crossover chart. Faithfull does not feature.

However, the trend towards extracts and compilations looks set to continue to divide the classical music world. Curtis Price, principal of the Royal Academy of Music, welcomes versatility among recording artists but fears that a crossover chart will only encourage the compilation genre to blossom further. "I think compilation albums are a bad thing. Such an album is like a meal that is nothing but desserts. The real world of music is not like that," he said.

Changing his analogy, he added: "These compilation albums are like a drug. If you think opera comprises just the high points you will continue to go for even higher highs and become addicted to the lollipops of opera."

Leading article, page 17

CROSSOVER CHART TOP 10

- 1 Best Opera Album in the World...Ever! Various
- 2 The Greatest Classical Movie Album Various
- 3 The No.1 Classical Album Various
- 4 Songs of Sanctuary Adiemus
- 5 100 Popular Classics Various
- 6 Something Wonderful Bryn Terfel
- 7 Braveheart LSO/Homer
- 8 Best Classical Album in the World...Ever! Various
- 9 A Lasting Inspiration Jacqueline du Pré
- 10 Classic Hits Various



The top-selling CD is a compilation of arias

Bainbridge wins second Whitbread novel award

By ERICA WAGNER
LITERARY EDITOR

BERYL BAINBRIDGE has won the Whitbread Novel Award for the second time with her book *Every Man For Himself* — nearly 20 years after she won it with *Injury Time* in 1977. It is one of four £2,000 category winners, each of which will be considered for the overall £21,000 Whitbread Book of the Year Prize, to be announced on January 21.

This year, for the first time, the Whitbread Children's Book of the Year, worth £5,000, will be announced separately on that date.

Seamus Heaney has won the Whitbread Poetry Award with *The Spirit Level*, his first collection since winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995. Heaney, too, has won the prize before, for *The Haw Lantern* in 1987. Diarmuid MacCulloch wins the Whitbread Biography Award with *Thomas Cromwell: A Life*, and John Lanchester's *The Debt to Pleasure* wins the Whitbread First Novel Award.

The novel judges, Gordie Greig of *The Sunday Times*, the writer Josephine Hart and the author and broadcaster Professor Lisa Jardine, said that *Every Man For Himself*, set aboard the maiden voyage of the *Titanic*, was "an extraordinary achievement. The dangerous edge of life has rarely been more sharply delineated." The book was shortlisted for the 1996 Booker Prize but lost to Graham Swift's *Last Orders*, which, in a reversal of fortunes, made the Whitbread shortlist.

Bainbridge said of the news: "I was told about it a few weeks ago and had to keep quiet. But when I heard I felt fantastic." She has already started her next novel.

Also on the novel shortlist were *Mr Clive* and *Mr Pige* by Neil Bartlett, *Cocaine Nights* by J.G. Ballard, *Asylum* by Patrick McGrath and *Ward Fears* by Fay Weldon.

FBI gets bogged down by girls' grisly experiments

By NICHOLAS WATT, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE FBI is busy with the work of three Belfast schoolgirls on the preservation of corpses. The students' experiments include burying dead piglets in bogs.

Agents based at the FBI academy in Quantico, Virginia, have been in regular telephone contact with the three A-level science students at the Dominican College to learn about their work. They sent the FBI volume, *Detection and Recovery of Human Remains*, to assist them.

Ciara McGoldrick, Fiona Fraser and Emma McQuillan, all 17, got in touch with the FBI

after they had compared the preservation and decay of corpses in bogs and in normal conditions. Miss Fraser said: "I remembered from the *Silence of the Lambs* film that the FBI academy was in Quantico. So we asked for the number from directory inquiries and were put through to the evidence response team. They were very helpful."

The FBI was keen to hear about the experiments on dead piglets, which involved burying some in bogs and studying others left above ground in a corner of the school garden. A stillborn piglet buried in Co

Donegal in the Irish Republic was perfectly preserved when dug up after six weeks. The teenagers said it had been preserved by a combination of the conditions in the bog and the condition of the animal when it was buried. Because it was stillborn, there was no bacteria in the gut to eat away at the corpse. Another animal, which was not stillborn, rotted in the bog.

Miss McGoldrick said: "This was a very important finding because all the books on this area say that the conditions of the bog are crucial to the survival of the corpse. But we showed that other factors, such as the state of the corpse at the time of burial, are also important."

The teenagers also uncovered important new evidence about the piglets that were kept above ground. They found that different flies and insects would eat the piglets as they passed through four stages of decay.

The students were inspired by the American thriller *The Body Farm*, by Patricia Cornwell. It tells the story of scientists at the University of Tennessee who investigate the decomposition of bodies in different conditions.



Misses Fraser, McQuillan, McGoldrick and bones

Tests with Alzheimer patients reveal a drug to remember

Alzheimer's disease is so common yet so disabling that news of any possible treatment causes immediate excitement. The Food and Drug Administration, the American drug-licensing authority, has just approved the use of the drug Aricept for this condition.

Aricept has been tested on 2,000 patients worldwide, including trials in Britain, centred on Manchester. The British statistics have still to be analysed but early reports suggest that about half of those given the drug in America showed improvement in

their memory. All the patients chosen for the test had mild or moderate Alzheimer's. The disease had not reached the stage where their personalities were disintegrating. The only symptom ameliorated by Aricept was forgetfulness.

Professor Alistair Burns of Manchester University, who has been collating the British research, said: "At last, after years of research, this is a potential treatment for one of the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease. This is no miracle cure but it is effective in improving the memory of some patients. The drug is



well tolerated, better tolerated than Tacrine."

Seventy-five per cent of cases of dementia in the over-65s are the result of Alzheimer's disease in which intelligent, charming and socially adept persons regress to being forgetful, then suffering short-term severe memory loss, until finally their intellect

disintegrates. The patient becomes incoherent, disoriented, deluded, agitated and restless. Physically, the disease is characterised by the deposition of beta-amyloid in the brain. The basic biochemical characteristic of Alzheimer's disease is a deficiency of the chemical acetylcholine, which

is a neurotransmitter. Aricept increases the level of acetylcholine by inhibiting the action of cholinesterase, the enzyme that neutralises the neurotransmitter. Thus the level of acetylcholine is to some extent restored to the level found when the patient was in possession of their faculties.

Tacrine, which has the same properties as Aricept, was not approved for use in Britain because its benefits to patients were meagre and 20 to 33 per cent of those treated developed hepatitis.

Aricept is likely to be expensive. But it is estimated that senile dementia costs the country more than £1 billion a year. If patients could be kept at home longer, not only would they be much happier but the cost of care would be substantially reduced.

Although drug treatment for Alzheimer's has been disappointing, one of the ironies of medicine is that two common vices can help to delay its onset. Smokers have a reduced incidence of Alzheimer's and there is increasing research evidence that moderate drinkers tend to be rather intellectually sharper in



Ahmed in hospital after the machete attack

LISA POTTS, the nursery nurse who shielded pupils from a machete attack last summer, was greeted by a three-year-old survivor when she returned to work yesterday.

Ahmed Malik suffered a 5in gash across his scalp and a fractured skull in the attack at St Luke's Church of England School in Wolverhampton. He was one of three children injured when Horrett Campbell, a paranoid schizophrenic, ran amok with a 2ft machete in July.

Miss Potts, 21, suffered deep wounds to her back, chest and hands, a broken arm and severed tendons in her hands as she tried to shield the children from Campbell's blows. Three other adults were injured in the attack.

Ahmed has been back to

happy and peaceful 1997 away from the glare of publicity. Campbell was found guilty last month of seven charges of attempted murder. He is due to be sentenced next month.

St Luke's reopened a week after the attack. Fences were set up around the school and security alarms issued to staff. Family doctors are employing security guards to deal with violent patients, because of a growing risk of assault. At the St John's Way health centre in Archway, north London, where a GP nearly died from knife wounds in 1995, two guards spend two hours each evening beside the receptionists' counter. Their weekly wages of £50 are paid by the health authority. In Birmingham and Southampton, several surgeries have security guards who escort staff on and off the premises to deter muggers, and to keep order in the waiting room.

Greenwich father accepts school ban

By STEPHEN FARRELL

DAVID JENNINGS, the former soldier who allegedly threatened to "do a Dunblane", gave an undertaking in the High Court yesterday not to approach schools or to buy a firearm. It followed an application by Greenwich council for a permanent injunction banning him from council buildings near his home in Abbey Wood, southeast London.

Jennings, 51, who has a firearms conviction, has made a series of complaints about caretakers looking after four of his ten children. He allegedly made the Dunblane threat to a chaplain at High Point prison, Suffolk, last year

and the council won a temporary injunction last week before his release from a 30-month sentence for affray.

After a five-minute hearing before a judge in chambers, lawyers for Jennings, the council and the Attorney-General announced that the issue had been resolved by mutual agreement. The indefinite undertaking forbids Jennings from acquiring or carrying a firearm or other offensive weapon, visiting schools or council premises without prior agreement, going within 50 to 100 yards of some buildings, and assaulting or threatening staff, pupils or teachers. He can be jailed if he breaches the terms.

Jennings, who declined to comment,

stood outside court in green prison-issue clothes as James Bancroft, his solicitor, read a statement. "Mr Jennings would like to give his absolute assurance to the public that he does not possess dangerous weapons and never intended to cause anxiety to parents in the area, of which he is one himself. However, he feels that this matter has been blown out of all proportion by the London Borough of Greenwich and has resulted in a huge and unnecessary waste of public money."

One school formerly attended by Jennings' children will remain shut when term starts today as workmen fit security measures demanded by parents. Many have refused to send their children back.

DR THOMAS STUTTFORD

nber

* On the road price applies to 306 Meridian 1.6 petrol 5 door with sunroof. ** On the road price applies to 306 Meridian 1.6 petrol 5 door with air conditioning. † Air conditioning available on petrol model only. Prices quoted include delivery to dealership, number plates and 12 months' Road Fund Licence. ‡ Cells charged at local rate. Insurance offer applies to drivers aged 27-75 years old, holding a full, valid UK driving licence for one year or more, ordering and registering any new Peugeot 306 Meridian model only between 12.1.96 and 31.3.97 and is subject to the terms, conditions and exclusions of the Insurance Personal Insurance Ltd on (01303) 853 303. Drivers convicted of a major driving offence in the last 5 years are automatically excluded. Insurance offer applies to private sales only (excluding Motability and any car involved by Peugeot Export) and is not available for hire, fleet, rental, commercial, or company fleets, hire, reward, off road use or by a driving school. Full details available on request. Prices correct at time of going to press. Vehicles offered subject to availability whilst stocks last.

Results of survey could raise Labour doubts over commitment to abolishing scheme

Lone parents will be 'worst hit' by ending of assisted places

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

SINGLE mothers would be among the biggest losers if a Labour government fulfilled the party's pledge to abolish the Assisted Places Scheme, according to research to be published this month.

Preliminary results of a survey in the group of schools with the largest concentration of assisted places showed that more than a third of those benefiting from the scheme were single parents. Almost the same proportion of the 1,710 families that responded earned less than £10,000 a year.

Evidence that Labour would be hitting one of the groups where its support is generally strongest will raise fresh doubts about the commitment to phase out the scheme, which provides help with independent school fees for low-income families.

David Blunkett, the Shadow Education Secretary, has said that no new assisted places would be awarded if Labour won the general election. The savings from the £141 million scheme would be used to reduce class sizes in the first two years of primary schooling in the state system.

Mr Blunkett underlined the commitment in a speech to the North of England Education Conference in Sheffield at the weekend. He said he agreed with George Walden, the former Tory Education Minister, who decried the scheme as creative accounting for mid-

dle-class parents and wrote: "There are only two things wrong with the Assisted Places Scheme: the principle and the practice."

Labour would use the money earmarked for assisted places to ensure that no state school pupil under seven was in a class of more than 30. A spokesman said yesterday that 500,000 children would benefit from the switch, compared with the 32,000 receiving subsidised fees.

However, Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary, says that the savings from the scheme would provide only one extra teacher for every eight schools. Its abolition would deny opportunities to bright children whose parents could not afford the schools of their choice.

More than half of the parents in the survey said they

had applied to the scheme mainly because they could not afford the independent education they desired for their children. In London, a third also cited poor state schools in their area.

The survey was carried out last October in the 26 schools managed by the Girls Public Day School Trust, where almost a quarter of secondary pupils have assisted places. The trust's schools, nearly half of which are in London, account for one in ten of all places in the scheme.

Questionnaires were sent to all 3,000 families whose children had assisted places. More than half replied. A total of 34 per cent of those were divorced or single parents. Almost 90 per cent of all those surveyed said they could not have afforded to educate a daughter independently without an assisted place. Only 2 per cent admitted that they could have found the money.

Almost two thirds of those responding received at least £3,000 a year from the scheme while four out of ten received the full fee of up to £4,900. Three quarters had sent their daughters to state schools before applying for a subsidised place.

Not surprisingly, 94 per cent of those surveyed supported the retention of the scheme, with another 4 per cent either undecided or refusing to answer. Only 2 per cent supported Labour's policy.

THE FIGURES

The Assisted Places Scheme was set up in 1980. Since then up to 100,000 pupils have been helped by the scheme, which costs £120 million a year. In September it was extended from 6,000 to 10,000 places a year. Nearly 40,000 pupils are now receiving help. Two fifths of the families involved earn less than £10,000 a year and four fifths receive less than the national average income.



Pamela Hobbs with Louise, a pupil of Birkenhead High School. "She has the intelligence and enthusiasm"

'There is no way I could pay a penny'

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

LOUISE HOBBS could not have attended a leading independent school in northwest England without the Assisted Places Scheme. The scheme covers the annual fee of nearly £4,000 for 15-year-old Louise to study at Birkenhead High School, which came second in the GCSE league table in the Wirral area this summer.

Pamela, her mother, is unemployed with four children and said she could not afford anything towards her daughter's education. The scheme allowed Ms Hobbs to choose between Birkenhead

High and two state girls' schools, West Kirby Grammar and Upton Hall, which also have strong academic records.

Louise passed the entry tests for all three schools and, although West Kirby's GCSE results are only slightly lower than those at Birkenhead High, Ms Hobbs said they chose the school for its better examination results and smaller classes.

She added: "I have got an older daughter and I was able to pay for her education because I was in a partnership at the time. There is no way now I could pay a penny. I knew Louise had the intelligence and the enthusiasm to go somewhere like that, but I could not afford it." Louise, who is preparing to

take nine GCSEs this summer, said: "I knew Birkenhead had the best results and they make sure you get the right education. I want to stay on and do three A levels and, hopefully, go to university."

Dick Davidson, deputy director of the Independent Schools Information Service, denied that the Hobbses were misusing the scheme because it was paying for Louise to attend an independent selective school rather than a state grammar. The whole point was that the scheme offered greater choice, he said. "It was never part of the justification that state schools were not good. It was to provide access to a different kind of education if parents wanted it."

Free help at home is a vanishing hope for the disabled and elderly

By DOMINIC KENNEDY, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

THE chances of free home help for the disabled and elderly is increasingly becoming a lottery depending on where they live, according to a study published today. Only 7 per cent of local authorities still provide free care, compared with 17 per cent two years ago.

Charges range from £1 a week in Hartlepool to £320 in Surrey, the union-funded Labour Research Department says. Eleven local authorities still charge nothing: the London boroughs of Barking & Dagenham, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Hammersmith & Fulham; the

English counties of Cumbria and Derbyshire; the metropolitan districts of Manchester and Wolverhampton; and Fife and West Lothian in Scotland. All but Cumbria are controlled by Labour.

Almost two-thirds of the 148 local authorities in Great Britain have a minimum charge for home care, even for people on benefits. Most councils decide charges according to a person's income or the level of service received but there are great variations.

The report in *Labour Research* magazine says: "Among councils with this system and who charge all users something, minimum charges range from £1-a-week in Hartlepool to £5-an-hour in Bury. Maximums range from

£5 a week in north-east Lincolnshire to £320 a week in Surrey." Flat-rate charges, which take no account of ability to pay, are imposed by 13 authorities, mainly Labour, although some of these still provide free services to people on income support or pensions.

Councils are obliged to provide home helps and have been able to charge for them since 1983, although the fees must be reasonably practicable. After Parliament transferred responsibility from the NHS to local authorities in 1990, charging became widespread. Government funding assumes that councils recoup about 10 per cent of the cost. Local authorities that still provide free home care must

find the money elsewhere in their budgets.

Alan Rhodes, head of social services resources for Surrey, said only one person paid £320 a week. For that, the council would provide care for at least 40 hours. A means test meant 60 per cent of people in the county received free care. Nine out of ten users were elderly.

□ Highest maximum weekly charges (with party political control): Surrey (no overall control) £320; Hartlepool (Lab) £92.25; Richmond upon Thames (Lib Dem) £92 (based on £368 per month); Stockton-on-Tees (Lab) £90; Stockport (NOC) £73.13; Scottish Borders (NOC) £67.80; Dorset (Lib Dem) £62; Angus (SNP) £60; Perth & Kinross (SNP) £60; Liverpool (Lab) £56.

Revised schools code will stress value of marriage

By JOHN O'LEARY

A COMPROMISE on the place of marriage in the proposed moral code for schools was agreed yesterday by government advisers.

Recommendations to be put to the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority later this month will insert a point into the "statement of values" emphasising support for the institution of marriage. But a subsequent paragraph will recognise that the "love and commitment required for a secure and happy childhood can be found in families of different kinds".

The original statement, drawn up by a 150-strong forum, made no direct mention of marriage, although

support for family life was included. Critics claimed that the omission would undermine traditional values and five members of the forum refused to endorse the document published last year.

About half the members of the forum met in London yesterday after extensive testing of opinion among parents, teachers and members of the public. The research showed overwhelming support for the statement, which contained 30 principles for action covering personal issues, society, relationships and the environment. Several amendments to the proposed code were agreed without difficulty yesterday. Among them was respect for the rule of law.

The issue of marriage con-

tinued to prove controversial, however. Some groups argued that teachers could not promote marriage in schools where most pupils came from broken homes. A minority continued to press for its inclusion in detailed terms. Five forum members refuse to accept the compromise, which will be put to Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, if it is endorsed by the authority.

Another recommendation from yesterday's meeting will see the production of model syllabuses on moral, spiritual and citizenship education for use in schools. The syllabuses, the research showed, aroused demand for courses designed along the lines of those available in religious education.

Sight of stocking can be shocking to drivers

By TIM JONES

THE two main motoring organisations were at odds yesterday over whether huge advertising posters by the roadside displaying the female form can cause drivers to crash.

The spat between the AA and the RAC centres around a 30ft hoarding near the sliproad to the M11 in Barking, east London, which shows a pair of long legs in lace-topped Pretty Polly stockings. The advertisement is one of 300 around the country.

According to the AA, such posters can be dangerous as they distract motorists when they should be concentrating on the hazards of the road. A spokeswoman said: "Drivers must learn to be disciplined and not allow them [the advertisements] to take up too much of their time. They could be dangerous, but no more so than a low-flying plane or a pretty girl or attractive man walking by."

That warning was dismissed by Edmund King, of the RAC, who claimed that such distractions could be of benefit to motorists caught in slow-moving traffic or faced with a long journey. He said: "To suggest they are dangerous is just barking and an insult to motorists. All our research indicates that drivers benefit from things which improve their attention span."

Mr King said that in Scotland and France, works of art such as sculptures were deliberately placed close to motorways to help tired drivers to maintain their awareness. He added: "About one in five accidents are caused because of driver fatigue, so these posters are, if anything, an aid to safety."

Drivers, he claimed, were far more liable to crash because they changed the station on their car radio than because they glanced at a poster which was in their field of vision.

A spokeswoman for Pretty Polly said: "We are promoting happy drivers, not dangerous drivers. The poster is not a danger, it just brings a little fun to driving."

Similar concerns were expressed over posters that showed a topless model lying on her stomach in a pair of Wolford's Falal Neonights.

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All-white Rorke's Drift play banned

By ROBIN YOUNG

AN AMATEUR theatre company has been banned from staging a play based on one of the British Army's most heroic battles for fear of offending a multicultural audience.

The company, Dramatis Personae, planned three performances of *For Valour*, by its playwright-director Nick Scovell, at Portsmouth Arts Centre next month.

The play is based on the defence of the Rorke's Drift mission by a garrison of 137 British soldiers against 4,000 Zulus in 1879. The episode, in which 11 Victoria Crosses were won, inspired the 1964 film *Zulu*, starring Michael Caine and Stanley Baker.

Mr Scovell has accused

managers at the arts centre, which is run by Hampshire County Council, of "censorship in the name of political correctness". He said yesterday that *For Valour* was to have been performed by an all-white cast with no "blackening-up" of faces, but that Nick Young, the centre's director, rejected the play as too insensitive for a multicultural audience.

"This is political correctness gone over the top," he said. "It is just censorship. The centre has conceded there is nothing in the script that might be construed as racist, but they still say it might cause offence."

Mr Scovell, 24, who is



Michael Caine: star of the film about the battle

studying for a college arts course, added: "The play gives the Zulus a voice which the Michael Caine film did not. It is a celebration of

valour, on both sides, as well as an exploration of the battle's origins and aftermath. There are no black actors playing the roles because we do not have any in our company. If we did have black actors I would cast them if they were the best people for the roles."

Mr Young said he thought the casting arrangement insensitive. "All we have done is decline to take a booking of the theatre, which we are well within our rights to do. We have a lot of multicultural users here and we must be sensitive to them."

He added that, in his view, the play did not give an adequate account of the issues surrounding the battle or the Zulu wars.

Canberra sets sail on last world cruise

By A STAFF REPORTER

PASSENGERS escaped the British winter yesterday as they sailed from Southampton on board *Canberra* for the liner's last world cruise before being retired after 36 years.

The voyage by the liner, dubbed the Great White Whale by the troops she carried during the Falklands War, is her twenty-second world cruise. Rory Smith, 52, her captain who joined the ship as first officer in 1973, said that he expected some tear-jerking moments as the vessel visited some of the world's main ports for the last time. "There are bound to be

thoughts of past voyages and the people who have sailed in her," he said.

The 44,907-tonne P&O liner will visit Hong Kong during her 82-night voyage and will leave the harbour as the Chinese New Year celebrations are in full swing. A warm welcome is also expected in Sydney, where *Canberra* has taken thousands of British emigrants to a new life.

Canberra will return to Southampton for a series of summer cruises before her last voyage next September. P&O has yet to make a decision on her future.

Wartime photo helps old soldier find his batman

By A STAFF REPORTER

AN OLD soldier has been reunited with the Indian batman who served him in the Second World War, thanks to a faded black and white photograph. Mike Barrett, a former corporal in the Royal Engineers, lost contact with Kalkho Daili, his teenage servant, after he left northeast India in April 1946. The only reminder of his friend was a photograph of them in their uniforms.

When the opportunity arose to join a ten-day Royal British Legion trip visiting war graves, Mr Barrett, 72, a retired power station engineer, decided to go in the hope of meeting again the orderly who had pressed his clothes, cleaned his shoes and kept his room tidy.

The tour coach was scheduled to stop for only half an hour in the remote village of



The photograph that Mike Barrett gave to Kalkho Daili in 1945 brought them together more than 50 years later

Mao Song Sung, on the border between the provinces of Assam and Nagaland, where Mr Daili worked for him for 18 months while he repaired roads and restored communications after the attempted Japanese invasion. Mr Barrett showed the picture to local people and asked them if they knew Mr Daili. Some claimed

he was dead, but one man rushed off and returned with a 67-year-old villager he said was Mr Daili.

The two men did not at first recognise each other. But any lingering doubts ended when Mr Daili ran back to his home and returned with his faded copy of the same wartime photograph, wrapped in yellow newspaper. Mr Barrett recognised his own handwriting on the back of the picture he had given to Mr Daili in 1945. The two men had time only for an emotional embrace and a hurried exchange of addresses before the coach left for its next stop.

On his return home, Mr Barrett sent Mr Daili photographs of their reunion and a new print of their wartime snap. Mr Daili wrote back before Christmas to wish his old master "love and affection" and enclosed a new photograph of himself in a suit and carrying a red cloth, showing his status as a village elder.

Mr Barrett, of Thornham, Norfolk, who is married with

two children and two stepsons, said yesterday: "We had our photograph taken together when I took Kalkho on a trip to Dimapur in Assam to pick up supplies from a railhead. When we parted in 1946, we said goodbye and I thought I would never see him again." He said that, when he saw Mr Daili, he had no idea if it was him or not. "What clinched it was when he went away to find the photograph I had given him and I saw my writing on the back. Seeing him again was a very touching moment which I will never forget."

Mr Barrett hopes to keep in touch with Mr Daili, who is married with five children. He said: "It's amazing that I managed to find him so quickly after so many years. A woman on the trip with me said she had heard of miracles happening and now she has seen one."

Stalemate in Hebron as deal is struck over observers

BY CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM
AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

WHILE Dennis Ross, the American negotiator, yesterday launched an intense effort to break the deadlock over Israeli troop withdrawal from Hebron, Israeli and Palestinian officials agreed in principle to enlarge an international observer force deployed in the flashpoint West Bank city.

The agreement would transform a 30-member Norwegian observer team deployed in the city since March into an 180-man force drawn from six nations, officials said.

After the failure of Sunday's secret four-hour summit between Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, and Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian Authority leader, Mr Ross shuttled once again between the two leaders in an increasingly desperate attempt to heal differences.

Last night as he met Mr Arafat in an office at the Church of the Nativity in the autonomous Palestinian town of Bethlehem, both Israeli and Palestinian officials spoke of the possibility of a further summit.

Earlier Israel army radio reported that the American envoy would consider ending his mission if no deal was reached soon, but US officials said they had no indication of any change in Mr Ross's travel plan. According to the radio, Mr Ross was offering Mr Arafat a compromise letter from the United States to accompany the agreement on Hebron — which has itself been almost completed.

Israel would carry out the three further redeployments in the West Bank that were laid down in the original peace deal.

After talks with Mr Netanyahu, Mr Ross said he expected to get the two leaders together again, but "I do not know when". Hinting at the failure to break down the suspicion among Palestinians that Mr Netanyahu will renege on further pull-backs once Hebron is evacuated, Mr Ross said: "We have made a

lot of progress. There is not a lot that separates the parties, but there is not an agreement yet and we do not have an agreement until everything is resolved. And everything is not resolved."

Before a meeting with Mr Arafat in Bethlehem, one Palestinian official revived charges that Mr Ross was biased towards the Israelis. Israel's respected newspaper *Haaretz* had quoted Mr Ross and other American officials as saying that Mr Netanyahu was "stretched to the outer limits of his flexibility" and could concede no more.

"I am astonished by Dennis Ross's statements which expressed his completely biased disposition," Marwan Kanafani, Mr Arafat's close aide, told Israel radio. "I think these statements harm the peace process."

Both Israeli and American officials have accused Egypt of persuading Mr Arafat to hold out for tougher terms on the Hebron deal and its aftermath than Mr Netanyahu can politically afford. One American official told the Tel Aviv paper *Yediot Ahronot* that Egypt was playing "a very problematic role".

In a further souring of relations, Amr Moussa, Egypt's Foreign Minister, claimed Israel had destroyed "all foundations" of peace between the two countries. "Israel is trying to excuse its procrastination by publicising news on Egypt's involvement," he said.

In Hebron, where 450 Jewish settlers live under a state of virtual siege surrounded by 120,000 Palestinians, tensions continued to rise in the absence of the long-awaited diplomatic breakthrough.

The level of mistrust was increased by a report in yesterday's *Jerusalem Post* claiming that Mr Netanyahu had told the Hebron settlers that, on the day the agreement is signed, they will be granted permission to build on a number of plots belonging to Jews in the city.

Snub to Queen by Hong Kong club

FROM CATHERINE FIELD
IN HONG KONG

THE royal connection with Hong Kong has suffered a further blow with a proposal to replace the Queen as patron of the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club with President Jiang Zemin of China, and the sale by the colony's police crotchery with the royal crest.

The club is also proposing that Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's chief executive designate, should replace Chris Patten, the Governor, as a vice-patron.

"Strictly speaking the patron should be head of state of our sovereign nation so I guess it would have to be the President of China," said Ian Dublin, a club member who led the campaign to keep "royal" in its title.

A colonial bastion for more than 100 years, the club was granted the royal title in 1894 by Queen Victoria. Last May members voted narrowly to retain the title in a bitter debate that threatened to divide the club.

On Thursday, the Royal Hong Kong Police Force will



Jiang proposed as patron of yacht club

auction 4,000 Royal Worcester plates, commemorating its 150th anniversary in 1994. Lord Howe yesterday warned "the leaders of public opinion" in Hong Kong not to attempt to subvert China. The former Foreign Secretary, who oversaw the British-Chinese Joint Declaration, said that while Hong Kong was entitled to keep its way of life, "the mainland is entitled to say we must remain free of subversion from Hong Kong".

Kiss of death for sex tourists

FROM ANDREW DRUMMOND
IN BANGKOK

FIVE women and a man have been arrested by Thai police in a sting operation after a spate of fatal and near-fatal drugings in which tourists passed out after licking prostitutes' nipples.

The gang, say police, has admitted drugings in Pattaya and Bangkok over the past few months, although members deny being involved in about 40 mysterious tourist deaths in Pattaya over the past year. However, police in the resort have been in touch with Bangkok colleagues investigating the heart-attack deaths this week of two Swedes, aged 32 and 35, in a

run-down hotel in the capital. Amorn Saiyakul, at 19 the youngest prostitute in the gang, has told police about three ways she was taught to administer the knockout drug. The easiest was to drop the drug in the drink. That usually worked. But if there was no drink available I could pass it on by placing it under my tongue and very quickly giving the man a deep kiss.

"The third way was to rub it on my nipples and let the tourist suck on them. They took about 20 minutes or so to pass out."

Among the gang's victims were three Austrians who slept through Christmas after being drugged at the Thai Garden Hotel in Pattaya.



David Mills with his wife Janet, who has become the second person to take her own life under Australia's voluntary euthanasia laws. Last night her husband claimed that his terminally ill wife died happy (Roger Maynard writes).

Mrs Mills, 52, who had been suffering from a rare form of skin cancer, died on January 2 with the aid of a computer-activated syringe which allowed her to self-administer a lethal drug.

Dr Philip Nitschke, right, who devised the apparatus, was present at the death. Mrs Mills's husband thanked Dr Nitschke for helping his wife to die.

Woman opts for euthanasia

"It's not difficult to say goodbye to someone that you've seen so happy to get her wish after they'd suffered so much," he said.

In a letter written shortly before her death, Mrs Mills said: "I believe that euthanasia is the greatest thing for people who are sick with no chance of getting better."

But news of the second mercy killing in Australia's Northern Territory,

where voluntary euthanasia was legalised last year, brought condemnation from the church and medical establishment.

The Australian Medical Association said it was not safe for society to have a law which allowed doctors to kill people. Boak Jobbins, the Anglican Dean of Sydney, said he understood the pain and suffering of those watching someone they loved succumb to a terminal illness, but their sickness was a "reality of life that euthanasia seeks to hide from us".

However, Jeff Kennett, the state Premier of Victoria, described Mrs Mills's death as "beautiful".



Australia pays £58m to silence weapons

FROM REUTERS
IN SYDNEY

AUSTRALIANS have handed in more than 250,000 banned firearms under a buy-back scheme launched after the Port Arthur massacre in April in which 35 people were killed by a lone gunman.

Daryl Williams, the Attorney-General, said the weapons — among them military style self-loading rifles and pump-action shotguns — had been exchanged for almost A\$120 million (£58 million) since May.

Gun owners held mass protest rallies when laws barring almost all types of semi-automatic weapons were introduced, but opinion polls showed up to 90 per cent support for a crackdown on firearms in the wake of the massacre.

Mr Williams said the response to the programme had made Australia a world leader in firearms management. Queensland state, which had previously failed to take part in the programme, would begin compensating firearm owners and dealers this month, he said.

There are an estimated four million privately-owned firearms in Australia, a nation of 18 million, but the number of banned guns has been difficult to gauge as most states did not have a register.

Martin Bryant was sentenced to life imprisonment in November for the Tasmania killings.

Freetown pirates get ten years

Freetown: Five Sierra Leonean soldiers were sentenced yesterday to ten years' imprisonment with hard labour after being found guilty of piracy.

The five were arrested last November after attacking a Spanish fishing boat off the coast of Freetown and trying to escape with £125,000 worth of fishing equipment. Attacks on fishing vessels off Sierra Leone average around four a month. (AFP)

Rebels kill 18

Paris: Muslim guerrillas killed 18 people and wounded 18 others in an overnight attack in Algeria's coastal province of Tipaza, 40 miles west of Algiers, the Algerian security forces said. (Reuters)

Kashmir hijack

Srinagar: Kashmiri separatists kidnapped four Indian Government employees — one a woman — at gunpoint from a vehicle here. None of the state's militant groups claimed responsibility. (AFP)

Ice rescue

Minesopolis: Brad Lidtke, 30, survived a 15-hour ordeal in temperatures as low as -46C after getting lost in his snowmobile on Lake Winnepigoshish. He was found frozen into the ice. (AP)

Veteran killed

Durham: George Beatty Jr, a 100-year-old First World War veteran, was beaten to death with a walking frame by a 77-year-old fellow patient in a hospital in this North Carolina town, police said. (AP)

Monkey business

Hanover: A tiny monkey, long thought extinct, has been found in Madagascar, the Hanover veterinary school announced. The monkey, *Alouatta trichotis*, weighs less than three ounces. (AFP)

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Murder rate in America dips for third year

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

THE number of murders in America dropped by 7 per cent in the first half of last year, continuing a three-year trend, according to the latest nationwide survey by the FBI.

The figures show that the improvement is driven by a sharp fall in crime in big cities. President Clinton, who made crime-fighting a central plank in his election campaign, depriving Republicans of one of their most popular themes, said that the figures marked the fifth successive year of falling crime and the longest period of declining crime rates since 1969.

"We are making a difference," the President said. "Today our neighbourhoods are

safer, and we are restoring the American people's confidence that crime can be reduced."

The FBI figures show a three per cent overall fall in reported serious crimes. Burglaries and aggravated assault fell by 5 per cent and motor vehicle theft by 4 per cent. Arson, up by 2 per cent, was the only offence to show a rise.

Janet Reno, Attorney General, attributed the falls to "more police on the street, fewer guns in the wrong hands, more prosecutors and more jail cells to keep criminals behind bars". Between 1980 and 1995, the country's total prison population increased by more than 240 per cent to 1.1 million

prisoners. However, crime experts dispute the Administration's claims that it should take all the credit for the improvement. One of the main factors behind the improvement — the ageing of the population — owes nothing to politicians' efforts. Compared with a decade ago, there are fewer young men in their late teens, a group disproportionately likely to commit crime.

New policing methods, pioneered in New York in the 1980s and widely copied by other city mayors, are also thought to have helped. Police have encouraged communities to become more involved and report more crimes, while cities have followed New York's policy of cleaning up graffiti and litter in rough neighbourhoods on the theory that orderliness encourages lawful behaviour.

In New York City, often used as the national benchmark for urban crime, there were 507 murders in the first half of last year compared to 574 in the same period of 1995. New York's own recent survey showed that murders in the whole of 1996 dipped below 1,000 for the first time since 1968.

However, the American capital was one of the few blackspots in the FBI survey. Washington, where local government is in a state of crisis, recorded 199 homicides in the first six months compared with 158 during the first half of 1995. The South was the only region of the US to show an overall increase — 3 per cent — in reported crime.

Car death envoy faces US charges

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

THE United States may request a waiver of immunity to prosecute a senior Georgian diplomat whose car was involved in a multiple pile-up in Washington.

The State Department said yesterday that the case was a serious matter but it was awaiting a report on possible criminal charges before seeking the waiver for Georgi Makharadze, the second-ranking official in the Washington embassy of the former Soviet republic of Georgia.

Police said his car sped into Dupont Circle, a major roundabout, and crashed into the back of another car that took off and landed on a third car, before hitting a further two vehicles. Jovianne Waltrick, 40, a front-seat passenger in the third car, was killed.

Police said they believe that speeding and alcohol were factors in the accident last week. An embassy spokesman said, however, that the car was being inspected for brake failure. The episode was the latest in a series of incidents in Washington that have raised public concern about the impunity of diplomats. Mr

Makharadze, who suffered only minor injuries but was said to be in deep shock, sent a letter of apology to the family of Miss Waltrick. It said: "I cannot express adequately in words my sorrow for having been part of this horrible tragedy or for the pain it causes and will continue to cause to her family and friends."

Under international law, the State Department can ask Georgia to waive immunity, but it would be up to his country to give consent. Eduard Shevardnadze, the President of Georgia, who is keen to retain cordial relations with the United States, hinted that the diplomat might pay some penalty. In a letter of condolence to the girl's family, Mr Shevardnadze said that the diplomat "must bear responsibility for the incident in accordance with norms".

David Richin, the family's lawyer, said the case amounted to murder and there had to be some recourse to justice. "You don't drive 100 miles an hour intoxicated and call it an accident," he said, although no figure for the car's speed had been released by police.



Renato: putting more police on street

Ex-Canadian leader settles libel action

FROM RICHARD CLEROUX IN OTTAWA

BRIAN MULRONEY, the former Canadian Prime Minister, has settled out of court his \$50 million (£21.7 million) libel action against the Government in Ottawa.

The Canadian Government had alleged in a letter to Swiss authorities that Mr Mulroney had accepted \$5 million in kickbacks in the purchase by Air Canada of 34 Airbus jets in 1988.

The case was to have begun in Montreal yesterday but an eleventh-hour agreement was reached between lawyers from both sides. Under the terms of the settlement the Govern-

ment is to pay Mr Mulroney's legal and other expenses which could reach \$52 million, while the former Prime Minister has dropped his damages claim.

Mr Mulroney's lawyers said his name had been "totally vindicated" and that the Government had apologised for any damage to his reputation.

Allan Rock, the Justice Minister, said the settlement did not stop the police investigation into the Airbus scandal and the Government had simply apologised for the wording of the letter.

Divorce for disgraced Clinton aide

BY IAN BRODIE

DICK MORRIS, whose affair with a prostitute led to his resignation as President Clinton's top adviser, was distraught yesterday by his wife's decision to divorce him.

Eileen McGarr, a lawyer, said she knew he was very sad about them going their separate ways after 20 years of marriage, but he was much stronger than five months ago when his disgrace became public.

In a statement, Mr Morris said: "More than anything else I wanted to stay married to Eileen... I'm devastated and deeply upset."

Mr Morris has been living apart from his wife and undergoing psychotherapy. There are reports that he and Mr Clinton, who planned political campaigns together off and on for 20 years, still talk frequently by telephone. Mr Morris's book on presidential politics, for which he will be paid \$25 million (£1.5 million) is due out this month.

Mr Morris had hoped his founding marriage could be rescued, but his year-long affair with Sherry Rowlands, a \$200-an-hour Washington prostitute, was not the only complication in his marriage. He also had an 11-year affair with Barbara Jean Pfaffin, a Texas estate agent. They have a daughter, now aged six.



Police try to persuade Jack Petelui not to give up his hold on a balcony at Manhattan's Ansonia Hotel. Moments later he fell 30 ft from the third floor. But thanks to a large air bag which police had inflated on the pavement, he was unharmed (Quentin Letts writes).

Air bag saves man in fall

underpants on Sunday. Seemingly troubled, he shouted to police and pedestrians that he was climbing the Ansonia Hotel "on the instructions of God" and was not to be disturbed. When he fell his arms flailed and there were gasps from onlookers, but instead of a sickening thud, his rapid descent ended in a whoosh

from the large, inflatable pillow. A surprised Mr Petelui was still bouncing up and down on his back when he was arrested, handcuffed, by police officers and taken away for psychiatric tests. Earlier he entered a local coffee shop and stripped off to his underpants and a green vest before starting the barefooted ascent

of the building, a 1904 Beaux-Arts structure which in its time has been home to Stravinsky, Caruso and Toscanini, among others. His ascent was aided by the cornices which decorate the Ansonia.

Police who arrived early at the scene kept the shivering Mr Petelui talking for an hour while the 10 ft-wide safety pillow was transported from a distant precinct and was inflated. He repeatedly stated that "God told me to climb".

Reform of Peru's 'medieval' jails offers solution to hostage siege

FROM GABRIELLA GAMINI IN LIMA

A COMMITMENT to improve harsh conditions in Peruvian prisons could be the only bargaining point that President Fujimori has left to assure a bloodless end to the hostage crisis.

The Tupac Amaru rebels, who still hold 74 hostages in the Japanese Ambassador's residence in Lima which they stormed on December 17, said they would not let their captives go until about 400 of their comrades were released from "inhuman jails". But they have also shown that they may be prepared to accept a promise of prison reforms.

"Fujimori could commit himself to improving the abject conditions in the prisons, without looking like he is caving in to the terrorists' demands," a Western diplomat said. "Those prisons where captured rebels are kept are like the dungeons of the Middle Ages. They desperately need reform."

Senior Fujimori's autocratic Government has a poor human rights record and the Peruvian jails are the starkest proof of this. Hundreds of prisoners accused of "terrorism" are shut away in tiny,

windowless underground cells where disease is rampant because latrines are holes in the ground. Convicts are allowed a glimpse of the sky once a week for half an hour and receive one visitor a month.

"The prisons are like coffins. They are no bigger than two metres long and a metre wide, and have very little air," said Francisco Soberon, a human rights activist. "We have reports of systematic torture and it is not unusual for prisoners to disappear, usually in a body bag," he added.

Most of the jailed members of the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) are kept in the Yanamayo prison on the shores of Lake Titicaca, 3,500 metres above sea level, the highest lake in the world. Here the temperature hardly ever rises above 9°C (48°F) and is usually well below zero.

The high security prison, housing about 500 inmates, is built into the side of a mountain and its tiny cells are windowless caves. I managed to get into this prison two years ago and guards boasted about the harsh treatment

given to prisoners. "Sometimes we don't let them see the sky for days. Very often we forget to give them food and lots of them just freeze to death. But they deserve it — they are just terrorists," one guard said.

The most closely guarded inmates at Yanamayo are six members of the Tupac Amaru's central command unit, who have been captured within the past five years, all of them serving life sentences for treason.

Also among them is Lori

Berensen, a 27-year-old New Yorker, who was sentenced to life in prison 18 months ago by a military court, made up of judges wearing balacavas. She admitted being a member of the rebel group and was accused of taking part in a failed attempt to take over the congress in 1995.

Human rights activists and American authorities have waged a campaign to have Berensen retried by a civilian court. She has been allowed one visit from her mother since she was jailed.

Victor Polay Campos, the Tupac Amaru rebels' leader, is held separately in a specially-built underground bunker at the naval headquarters in Callao, just outside Lima. He was caught in June 1992 and displayed to the media before being lowered into a cell, inside a cage.

Human rights workers say Polay has had little contact with the outside world and spends months on end in total darkness. "I have seen my son three times in four years. He is subjected to inhuman treatment and is dying slowly," said Ottilia Polay, the rebel leader's mother.



Fujimori: could offer to improve conditions

Chrysler heads race for hydrogen cars

BY NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

A MORE environmentally friendly car powered by hydrogen could be on the market in nine years, one of the world's big automobile makers claimed yesterday.

Fumes from the car, which will be up to 50 per cent more fuel efficient, will be water vapour and carbon dioxide. The development, announced yesterday at the North American International Auto Show, has been made by Chrysler, America's third largest car maker. It says the answer to cleaning city air is

not battery power but fuel cells.

They use a catalyst to react with hydrogen and oxygen from the air to turn an electric motor and were demonstrated more than 150 years ago in London. But their use as a car power pack has been limited by the size of the cells required and the power delivered.

Nevertheless several car makers have been racing to develop light-weight efficient fuel cells to meet American clean-air legislation. The Chrysler version uses a "re-

former" that turns low octane petrol into the hydrogen fuel.

Some companies envisage vast processing factories to generate hydrogen to be supplied to a network of hydrogen filling stations. But Francois Castaing, Chrysler's vice-president of vehicle engineering, said: "We believe hydrogen needs to be processed from gasoline on board vehicles."

Dr Gary Acres, a fuel expert at Johnson Matthey in Sonning Common, Berkshire, said yesterday that fuel cell emissions would make smog a

thing of the past. Daimler-Benz, which last year unveiled a fuel cell-powered vehicle, that ran on pure hydrogen, is also working on a reformer to generate hydrogen from petrol.

Critics claim such systems are no solution because they still rely on petrol.

The Union of Concerned Scientists said: "The true promise of fuel-cell technology will only be realised through the use of renewable fuels, such as hydrogen, methanol or ethanol."

Washington's diners mourn passing of gravy train

BY IAN BRODIE

TIMES are lean along Gucci Gulch, the marble corridors of Congress where lobbyists try to influence members before they vote on legislation.

Things are even worse outside on Capitol Hill where at least one restaurant has closed and others are suffering a serious loss of revenue.

The hardships are caused by a sweeping ban, just entering its second year, on members of Congress accepting gifts, including invitations to dinner or lunch, at someone else's expense. Some in Congress are beginning to wonder if they have taken the puritanical ethic too far.

Luckily for diplomats, foreign gov-

ernments are not regarded as lobbyists and can carry on entertaining. Sir John Kerr, Britain's Ambassador, has noticed no falling-off in acceptances for dinners and lunches at his magnificent Lutyens residence.

But elsewhere the draught has been severe. At Le Mistral restaurant two blocks from Congress, the owner, Joseph Alonzo, has seen lunch trade all but vanish. He dismissed 35 staff and opens now only for private parties. At another restaurant, La Colline, revenue fell \$400,000 (£240,000) in the past year. The loss of 10 per cent sales tax on restaurant meals is also a blow to Washington city council, already on its uppers.

Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffing-

ton, a conservative commentator, invited several members of Congress to her mansion for a candlelit dinner of sorrel soup, rack of lamb and sorbet. Next day, she topped up the cost of the ingredients, as requested, and was prepared to bill each guest for their share of the meal, about \$26. None of them paid, after deciding she was a friend and so was exempt from the restrictions, but the episode showed how wary Washington has become.

The restrictions were passed to correct the view that Washington had become a gift-giving Eden where largesse and favours went hand in hand. Gifts of any value were banned for House members. A limit of \$50 was imposed on senators.

Also excluded were the ever-popular golf and skiing trips where corporate benefactors picked up the tab. Lunch and dinner invitations are out unless the host is a relative, personal friend or sponsor of a charitable function.

As rendered by bureaucrats some of the rules are a maze. Complimentary tickets to charities can be accepted, unless they have been bought by a corporation. In that case, says a stern memorandum, members "may not accept the invitation of the corporation's chief executive to sit at his table".

In despair, some members wanted to ease the regulations, but the risk of being seen as favouring a resumption of gift-giving had a chilling effect and the effort collapsed.



Huffington: counted cost of dinner for friends

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Whistling protest signals failure of Milosevic regime

NOT even the riot police in their Star Wars outfits can shield President Milosevic from the clamour of protest that carries up to his office.

It is 7.30pm and the start of state television and radio news. Heading the call of Vuk Draskovic, the opposition leader, to block out the regime's media propaganda with a wall of sound, hundreds of thousands in the city are blowing whistles, hooting car horns, setting off fireworks, banging pans, drums — anything to produce an overwhelming noise.

The effect is awesome, a still, defiant cacophony that makes the skin prickle. But it is the noise from booming flats in nearby Banja that most disturbs the President. There the sound is frenzied. More people, more protest, more noise than elsewhere in the city. And that casts dark shadows into his Christmas Eve. For Banja is the military quarter and the thousands of angry people there, the officers, soldiers and families of the Yugoslav Army, are enraged.

Even the army's supreme

In an ominous signal to the President, the army last night assured students it would not intervene as protests enter an eighth week. Anthony Loyd reports in Belgrade

command has sought to distance itself. Yesterday, on the Orthodox Church's Christmas Eve, General Miroslav Perisic, the most senior commander, issued a public communiqué saying: "The army will operate within the constitution so that the current problems will be overcome in a peaceful manner similar to that of democratic countries."

Something is happening in Belgrade more substantial than protests over rigged municipal elections. Serbs want their share of the political change that swept aside dictatorships across eastern Europe. Religion, nationhood, history, war, passion, darkness and tragedy, the soul in each Serb is a wild and complex entity. War has played a disproportionate role in shaping the Serb identity, so it is no irony that percep-

tion of the most recent bloodshed has turned full circle to confront the man who began it, and that among those most angry are those most directly involved in the fighting.

"Milosevic led us into war, then lost it and blamed us," says Predrag, a soldier and veteran of action in Croatia and Bosnia. "Serbs have a tradition of fighting for noble causes but to get us to fight one another Milosevic played on our worst trait — our sense of dishonour — and the whole thing became a ghastly circle of atrocity and cleansing, shaming us all. We must have been in some kind of psychosis."

The war seems to be in the mind of every protesting Serb, and it is not merely losing President Milosevic's battle for a Greater Serbia that makes them angry. "What did



German soldiers stand guard at a Nato base outside Sarajevo, breaking with a post-Second World War taboo on deploying troops abroad

Milosevic give us?" asked Mr Draskovic rhetorically in an interview with *The Times*. "Bloodshed, civil war, hatred, tragedy and graves. The protesters you see on the streets now represent the face of the real Serbia ... We are for

multi-ethnicity and democracy, not the Serbia Milosevic showed the world, the place of cleansing and atrocity in which our people shelled cities like Sarajevo, killed prisoners and performed atrocities."

It is no coincidence that in this gale of self-examination the Orthodox Church has joined the protesters. After last night's procession through Belgrade thousands followed the Orthodox Patriarch His Holiness Pavle to burn ceremonially the Yule branch

at Saint Sava's Cathedral — a symbol of protest, confession and contrition. In Sarajevo the first German troops to take part in the Nato-led peace force in Bosnia arrived yesterday to join a combined German-French

brigade. About 120 soldiers flew in from their base in Cologne, and were transported to Rajlovac barracks, about seven miles northwest of the city.

Leading article, page 17

Yeltsin kept from defence meeting by 'heavy cold'

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

PRESIDENT YELTSIN yesterday cancelled meetings scheduled for this week complaining of a "heavy cold and a high temperature", and raising fresh doubts about his state of health.

Only a fortnight after he returned to work vowing to reinvigorate his leadership, following a prolonged absence for most of the second half of 1996, the Russian leader was again ordered to rest by his doctors. Sergei Yastrzhembsky, the Kremlin spokesman, emphasised that the current health problems were not connected with President Yeltsin's multiple heart bypass surgery in November. Rather, he insisted, the Russian leader, like other members of his family, had succumbed to a bout of flu.

Aside from the renewed fears raised by President Yeltsin's latest absence from office, his illness may nevertheless prove politically beneficial since it forced the postponement of a potentially stormy meeting of the Defence Council scheduled for tomorrow.

According to reports in the Russian press, Igor Rodionov, the Russian Defence Minister, has threatened to tender his resignation in protest over the inadequate funding for the armed forces in this year's budget and proposed cuts to troop levels. Although the Defence Ministry denied the reports, military sources did confirm that fundamental differences exist between Mr

Rodionov, a former general, and Yuri Shturim, the head of the Defence Council, over how to proceed in reforming the armed forces.

A clash between the two was widely anticipated as the deadline which President Yeltsin, as the commander in chief of the military, would have had to settle. For now the decision has been put off, although in the near future the Russian leader will have to tackle the very real crisis facing the impoverished and demoralised 1.5 million-strong military.

The army, the navy and air force are slowly disintegrating with fresh horror stories every day about conditions in the ranks. For instance, many Russian troops who completed their withdrawal from Chechnya at the weekend, have nowhere to live. Entire units, based in the northern Caucasus, are living in sub-zero temperatures under canvas relying for supplies on the charity of local farmers.

London: President Yeltsin stepped up his country's opposition to Nato expansion in weekend talks with Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor. Western diplomatic sources said. They said the Russian leader wanted a legally-binding commitment from the Western alliance to involve Russia in formal consultations with Nato on any issue, including enlargement, which would give Moscow huge influence over alliance decisions. (Reuters)



President Yeltsin and Viktor Chernomyrdin, right, the Prime Minister, at yesterday's talks on Nato

French pick over 'sphinx' legacy

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

THE legacy of François Mitterrand will be thrown into sharp relief tomorrow with a series of grand and solemn events marking the first anniversary of his death, and a contrasting avalanche of books and articles depicting the former President as a deceitful manipulator with an obsessive "Casanova complex".

A year after Mitterrand died from prostate cancer on January 8, France remains deeply intrigued by the enigma of the "sphinx" who ruled the country for 14 years. Mitterrand's posthumous reputation has been torn apart by disclosures that he knew about his illness since taking office, but concealed the truth for more than a decade.

This week Pierre Mauroy, Mitterrand's first Prime Minister, admitted that he had been told of the President's cancer "right from the start".

In a book published soon after Mitterrand's death, Claude Gubler, his personal physician, described how his former boss had insisted on secrecy despite a public promise of "openness"

about his health. The book was banned within 24 hours of publication after the Mitterrand family filed a lawsuit claiming invasion of privacy.

While Mitterrand may have been economical with the truth he was lavish with his affections, according to a new book by Georges-Marc Benamou, the young journalist picked by the President to chronicle his last years.

"He was fascinated by Casanova," M Benamou told *France-Soir*. "He couldn't go into a bar or restaurant without seeking out the face of a woman, and giving his famous wink. Even suffering from his illness, he had the sharp eye and sure touch of a veteran seducer. He loved women right to the end."

Mitterrand did nothing to hide his adulterous conquests from his wife Danielle, who suffered greatly. M Benamou said.

But while Mitterrand's personal and political morality continue to excite avid speculation, the former President's widow and political supporters are nurtur-

ing the Mitterrand myth. On Thursday, Mme Mitterrand will attend a ceremony in the southwestern town of Jarnac, where her husband was born and is buried. This will be followed by a tribute at Château Chillon in Burgundy where he served as Mayor.

Later this week the Socialist leader's allies, such as Jacques Delors, former President of the European Commission, and foreign dignitaries including President Castro of Cuba, will attend a Unesco seminar entitled "François Mitterrand — Peace and Development".

Mitterrand's devotees have pledged to protect his memory. His personal papers, left to his illegitimate daughter Mazarine, have been deposited at the newly-founded François Mitterrand Institute. Roland Dumas, a former minister who is now president of the institute, told *Le Monde* that access to the archives would be granted only to "academics or journalists following specific researches", and not "to just anyone".

Spymaster Wolf back in court on kidnap charges

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

THE brutal espionage war of the 1950s and 1960s will come back today to haunt Markus Wolf, the communist spymaster who faces charges of organising the kidnapping and beating of agents.

A previous attempt to jail the 73-year-old former East German general in 1993 — he was given a seven-year sentence for treason — was frustrated by the Constitutional Court which ruled that all spies from East and West Germany, should be treated equally. Since Herr Wolf was spying as an East German citizen for the legally-constituted East German state, it was deemed unjust to jail him.

Now the German prosecutors will try again and in doing so should provide a fascinating insight into the espionage skirmishes of the Cold War. Herr Wolf is charged with ordering the kidnapping and torture of a Stasi agent, Walter Thirne who defected to Austria in the 1960s. He and his wife were lured into a trap in a Vienna hotel, drugged and beaten and then taken via Prague to East Germany for a secret trial and a ten-year jail term in one of the country's toughest prisons.

In an early attempt to compromise Willy Brandt — then an active politician in West Berlin — Herr Wolf also

ordered the abduction of Christa Trapp from Berlin, according to the indictment to be presented today. Frau Trapp was a translator for the Americans in Berlin and was blackmailed into spying for East Germany.

The third main charge against Herr Wolf concerns the arrest and torture of Georg Angerer, an East German writer. The writer was supposed to have co-operated with the Gestapo in Norway and, according to the prosecutors, Herr Wolf wanted Angerer to declare that Brandt (who spent the war in Norway) was also a Gestapo agent.

Herr Wolf denies the charges, claiming they amount to persecution by the German authorities. "Even if the allegations were true, they are charges you could bring against almost any intelligence operative in East or West," he claims.

Herr Wolf, who ran East Germany's foreign intelligence agency for 30 years, may escape again, even if the charges are proved. Since the alleged crimes date from the 1950s and early 1960s, his defence team will be able to argue that they are covered by the statute of limitations.

But if nothing else the trial should dent his image before publication of his memoirs.

Animal rights protests greet Rome circus

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

HUNDREDS of animal rights protesters yesterday tried to disrupt the new year season-of-one of Europe's oldest circuses when it reverted to using tigers and rhinoceroses after a year-long "animal-free" experiment.

The protesters were led by the environmental campaigner Marchesa Marina Ripa di Meana, who chanted animal rights slogans from inside a small metal cage outside the entrance to the circus. "Despite the protests the

Orfei circus, which has been performing for nearly 200 years, played to packed houses during the Epiphany holiday.

Last March, Nando Orfei, the 61-year-old circus owner, gave in to pressure from animal rights activists and removed performing animals from his shows, relying on clowns, trapeze artists and strongmen to draw the crowds. But audiences dwindled disastrously, and yesterday Signor Orfei announced that the animals were back.

The Marchesa, the Italian "ambassador" of the World

Wildlife Fund, said the metal cage was intended to symbolise the suffering of animals in captivity.

Last year, the Marchesa, who is known for her colourful lifestyle (she boasts of her many lovers and once published an erotic strip cartoon featuring herself), was ejected from a French Embassy reception after draping a balcony with a banner protesting against nuclear testing in the Pacific. Last March, she posed asked for a series of giant roadside posters to protest against the use of fur in the fashion industry.



Ripa di Meana: made protest inside cage

Amazing.

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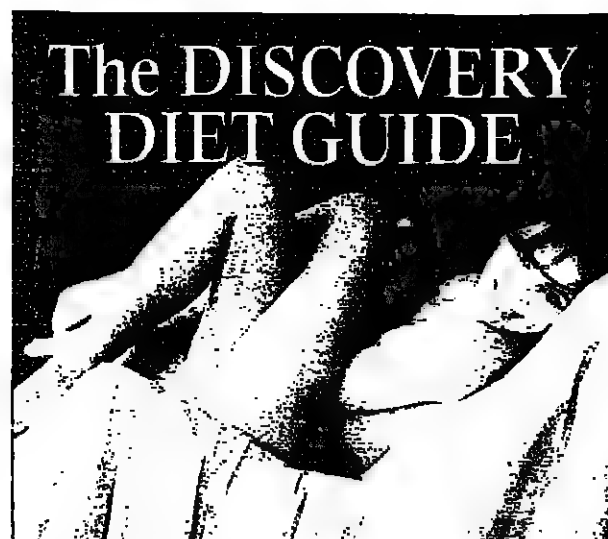
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MCS162NS

Giles Coren investigates unhealthy Western eating habits and Royal Ballet Principal

The DISCOVERY DIET GUIDE



Continuing our diet guide, we examine problems caused by food that is too acidic

ARRIVING at the Hale clinic in central London for advice about your diet, you do not expect to hear good news. It is a slightly spooky place. Very clean. People with calm smiles hover around, while the shop downstairs sells countless kinds of vitamins and food supplements.

There are no spots in evidence, no slouched shoulders. No one is tense, or tired, or fat. They are not going to recommend red meat, claret, chips or beer. You know that right from the start.

Peter Bartlett is not, however, a particularly forbidding man. He is friendly and avuncular with an authoritative "doctorly" way about him. He is not, of course, a doctor. Otherwise this would be a hospital. Full of fat, sweaty, tense, ill people.

He is an osteopath, naturopath and practitioner in natural therapeutics whose degree was in social science. He is also qualified in McTimoney chiropractic and remedial massage.

But as the annual Christ-

mas eating binge takes its toll on our health, Mr Bartlett is keen to promote another area of his work, a part of his naturopathy that he calls "phenomenal Health".

"The use of pH testing as a measure of a person's digestive physiology — and hence his emotional, mental and physical health generally — has fascinated me for a long time," he says. "I was trying to come up with a catchy name for it, and I thought of this 'phenomenal' idea."

"In essence it is all about the imbalance of acid and alkali in our bodies, which is a universal problem and the cause of a lot of disease, particularly in the West. It is not widely appreciated because there have not been enough tests, or big enough test groups."

"This is hardly surprising, because doctors are not particularly interested in nutrition — for a long time there was only one hour-long lecture on it in the first three years of a medical degree course. And there are still only a few hours, even now."

Scientific method that promotes positive living

PETER BARTLETT believes the main nutritional problem from which most of us suffer is acidosis. "This occurs when the body is unable to rid itself of excess acids. It can hinder recovery after surgery, for example, and reduce the effectiveness of drugs," he says.

"The body is naturally alkali. On the pH scale, blood is 7.4 with a range between 7.35 and 7.45," says Mr Bartlett. "If your blood is outside that scale, you die. So I do not go in for blood testing — if the person is alive, the test will be normal. Instead I use saliva and urine tests, which vary more widely."

"While our bodies are alkali, the activity of our cells produces acid as a by-product. This is converted to carbon dioxide and water and harmlessly expelled through the lungs. If we eat too much acid food, however, the body has to rid itself of the resultant acid wastes, which it cannot do in the same way. The body has to buffer the acids with alkalis to neutralise them, and this affects the pH level of the cells."

"If you are emotionally, mentally, or physically run-down, these buffers will not operate as efficiently as they should. By testing the levels of acidity in your urine and saliva with litmus paper, you

can measure the effectiveness of your body in dealing with acids, and hence the overall health of both your metabolism and your diet."

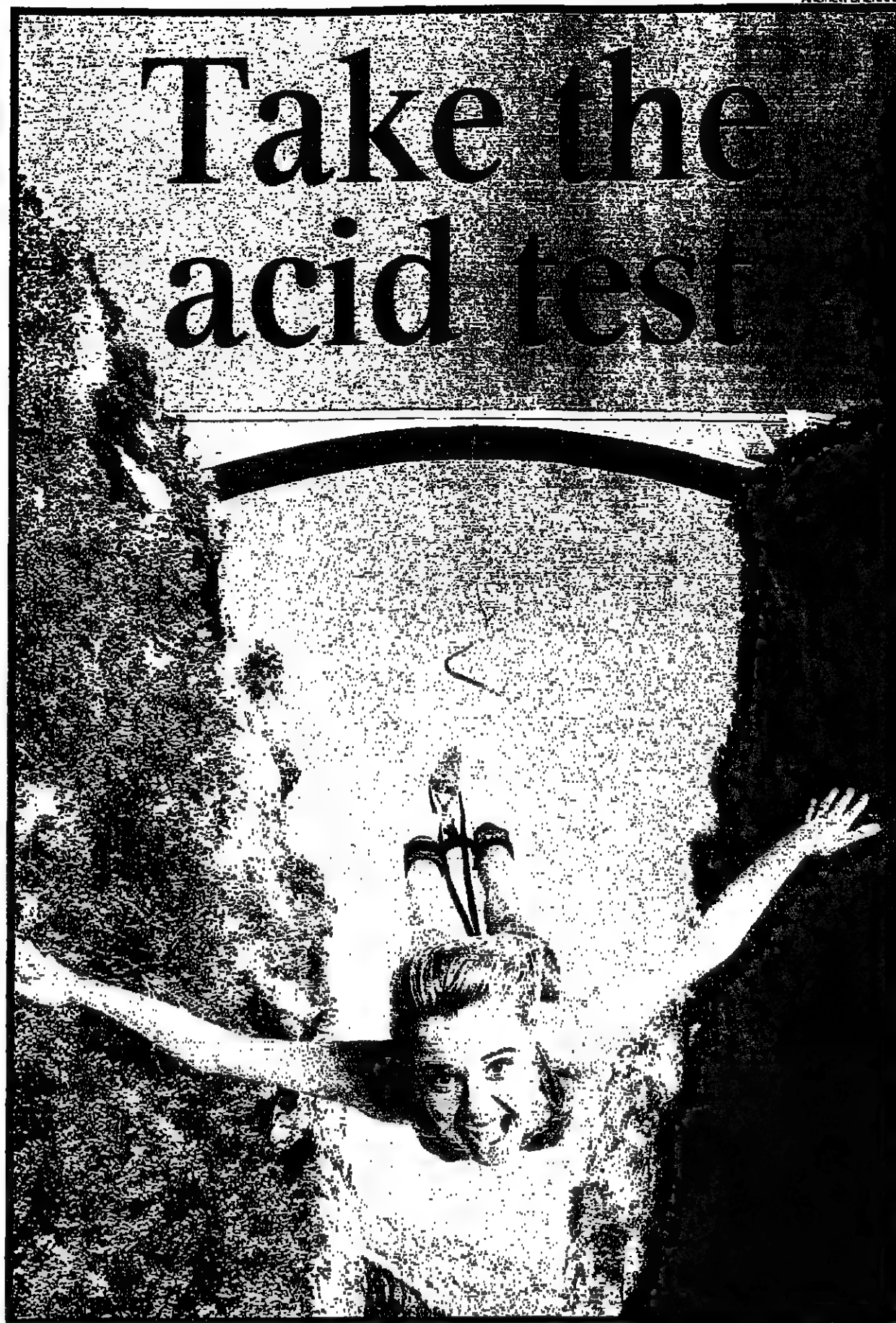
By acid foods, however, Mr Bartlett does not mean foods that have an acidic pH rating such as oranges and lemons, but foods that form an acid "ash" — the residue left after the food has been consumed and metabolised. Acid-ash forming foods are largely proteins, whereas alkali-forming foods are normally fruit and vegetables.

"This is because a carbohydrate molecule breaks down into only carbon, hydrogen and oxygen, whereas protein is a carbohydrate molecule plus phosphates, nitrates and sulphates. These end up in the body as phosphoric, nitric and sulphuric acids, and have to be turned into a salt — which the body does by attaching sodium to them. They can only be expelled as urine or sweat — hence the urine and saliva tests."

The Western diet is protein-heavy, which is why 80 per cent of us have too much acid in our diets.

Foods on the acid list range from scallops and oysters through sausages, oatmeal, peanuts and flour to all red meats, eggs, honey and corn.

Foods that produce alkaline



HOW OUR VOLUNTEERS FARED

TWO people on "normal" diets tested the pH of their saliva on waking in the morning, by licking a strip of litmus paper and matching its colour to a chart provided. Then they ate breakfast and retested after two minutes. Four minutes and six minutes. This revealed the initial acidity levels in their bodies and how effectively they dealt with the acid content of their breakfast. The ideal readings are as follows: 1st test: 6.8 (before eating); 2nd: 8.0; 3rd: 7.5; 4th: 6.8. In other words, six minutes after a meal, the pH balance in saliva should return to its original level.

They also tested their urine first thing in the morning. They then ate acidic foods for two days and retested, to see how their bodies had coped with the diet. The ideal result is 6.1 on the first urine test and 5.3 after two days.

The results were sent to Mr Bartlett who, after diagnosing both tests, commented on their health and gave dietary advice.

● Litmus paper for home testing is available from E.P. 1, 25 New Road, Spalding, Lincs PE11 1DQ

DEBORAH BRET

"I eat quite healthily, I think. For breakfast I eat either raisin oatflakes with semi-skimmed milk, or just a couple of apples. I always have a cup of tea — apparently it aids digestion. Around 11:30am, I snack on carrot sticks. Lunch is either a salad or soup. For dinner I have maybe a rice stir-fry or grilled chicken or fish with vegetables. I do love crisps, my fatal flaw."

Saliva tests: 1st: 6.8, 2nd: 7.6, 3rd: 7.0, 4th: 6.8.
Urine tests: Before: 6.0, after: 5.5.

Bartlett says: "Both the saliva and urine results indicate her metabolism is under control, and that her bicarbonate and phosphate buffers are working. She has enough alkaline reserve to produce an acid salt, (excreted in the urine) and by returning to her original pH 6.0 and salivary pH 6.8."

GILES COREN

"I never eat anything before lunch. Then I eat an enormous serving of meat, with vegetables only if fried, and wine. I eat chocolate in the afternoon. In the evening I eat out again, applying similar guidelines to my lunch. Occasionally, I eat half a grapefruit on Sunday."

Saliva tests: 1st: 5.8, 2nd: 8.0, 3rd: 7.6, 4th: 6.9.
Urine tests: Before: 5.1, after: 5.1.

Bartlett says: "The saliva test begins ten points below optimal, although his reaction to food is normal. This indicates he is consuming too much dietary protein and tends to lose sodium quickly, although his alkaline reserves are still sufficient to counter the acidity created by the food. I would say, that he is not functioning optimally. He would benefit by following the 'transitional (pHase one)' diet for six weeks before moving on to the 'modified (pHase two)'."

ash are mainly plant-derived. Particularly effective are raw spinach, molasses, celery, carrots and dried beans.

The behavioural effects of acidosis are wide-ranging. According to a chart provided by Mr Bartlett, they begin with an exaggerated sense of well-being and excessive ambition and restlessness due to nervous irritation, then quickly turn into irritability, constant fault-finding, pessimism, sleeplessness, redness, aches, pains and premature ageing.

"The quickest way to combat acidosis is to relieve mental and emotional stress," says Mr Bartlett. "But that is not always easy. It is much easier to change your diet — but the effects take longer to show."

Mr Bartlett does not, however, take a disciplinary attitude towards the dieting of his patients. "Rather than taking the approach of a conventional doctor and telling my patients what to do, I simply give them the information they need to help themselves," he says. "Restoring the balance nutritionally is something they can do; the emotional balance comes later."

AT-A-GLANCE FOOD GUIDE

ACIDIC

Scallops
Oysters
Dried lentils
Sausage
Sardines
Oatmeal
Corned beef
Lobster
Peanuts
Haddock
Cream crackers
Cod
Macaroni
Spaghetti
Peanut butter
Chicken
Eggs
Wheatgerm
Brown rice
Whole wheat flour
White flour
Salmon
Wheat bran
Turkey
Barley
Raisins
Lamb

ALKALINE

Raw Spinach
Molasses
Celery
Dried Fig
Carrots
Dried Beans
Chard leaves
Watercress
Sauerkraut
Lettuce
Green Lima beans
Dried Lima Beans
Cabbage
Broccoli
Beans
Brussels sprouts
Green soy beans
Cucumbers
Parsnips
Radishes
Dried peas
Mushrooms
Cauliflower
Pineapple
Avocado
Veal
Dried dates

Put yourself into neutral for a healthier life

ONCE you discover that your diet is too acidic to cope with the external acidifying effects of everyday life you will want to make a change.

First you start the "transitional diet (pHase one)". This is a bridge between your normal diet and a new "modified diet (pHase two)", and, ultimately, an "ideal diet (pHase three)".

In it, the patient is not required to give up anything, but to increase vegetable and fruit consumption, eat one vegetable-only meal every day, and to add servings of fruit to his normal intake.

As your pH readings improve, you can move on to the "modified" diet. This means that breakfast is a meal of just fruit, lunch is a meal of just starch, such as vegetable salad, broccoli, asparagus or yams, and supper should consist of protein — salad, yellow squash, cabbage or sunflower seeds.

Foods to avoid at all costs range from coffee, tea, ham and bacon to spaghetti, crackers, and milk.

Finally, for the patient whose urine and saliva pH readings indicate that his body is functioning normally and maintaining an adequate alkali reserve, it is time to move on to the "ideal" diet.

"This means that 75 per cent of your food should be fruit and vegetables, of which 30 per cent should be eaten raw, while the other 25 per cent is made up of grains, nuts and seeds, with some meat, fish or poultry if you fancy it," says Peter Bartlett.

"I am not trying to make this out as a panacea. It may sound a bit too good to be true as a solution to so many things, but it is all based on biochemistry."

"It is not an exact science, though. You can't count the effect in milligrams — if you had some bad news one day, you could reckon on acidosis the next. And Christmas is a bad time for acidosis. So is summer — barbecue time, because of all the protein, and because alcohol stimulates the

cells to work harder, which makes them secrete acid. Another thing that might reduce acidosis would be changing your exercise regime from, say, squash to yoga — a more alkali-promoting exercise."

It is a long process. It takes three to six months to see a change with nutritional control, though emotional changes can affect things more quickly.

But the positive effects could be marvellous. "Sportsmen are less likely to suffer niggling injuries if they have a more balanced pH," he says.

"When Faustino Asprilla did his hamstring against Metz last year, I could see that it was going to happen because his energy levels were flagging as a result of acidosis. I'm not saying the trainer should have run on and stuck a bit of litmus paper in his mouth, but knowledge of the condition would be useful."

"Concentration spans are shortening because of acidosis, which is why modern business presentations only last about eight minutes. That could be remedied by the right diet."

"AND the prevalence of osteoporosis is relevant too, because one of the elements the body uses to neutralise acids is calcium, with the result that the body can become deficient in it. Even babies can get osteoporosis if they are fed on non-human milk because the protein levels of cow's and artificial milk are so much higher than human milk, and cause acidosis."

"That is why babies' urine often smells of ammonia. It is released straight into the bladder to try to neutralise the acid. In other words, the baby will lose the calcium in acidosis that it supposedly gets from the milk."

From the cradle to the grave, then, acidosis is destabilising our bodies, our minds, and our emotions. But a little bit of litmus paper, and a portion of fruit, could make a phenomenal difference.

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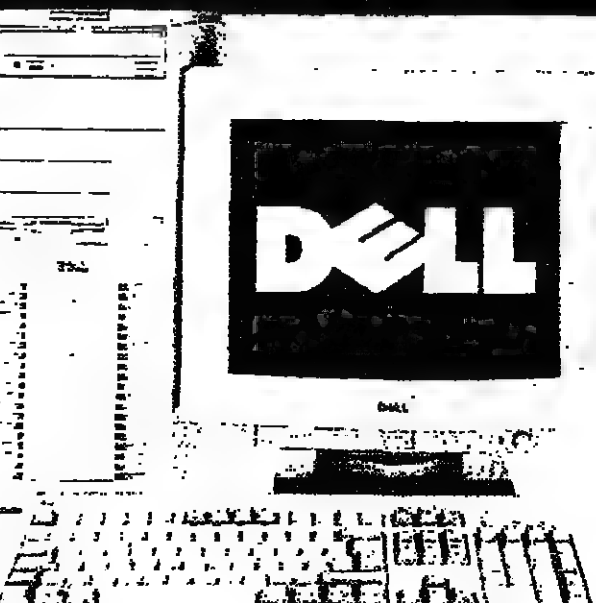
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of showing that it is adulterated. Otherwise the consumer is being duped by buying something that is of no value."

Professor Arnold Bender, senior head of the department of food science and nutrition at Queen Elizabeth College, London, said: "Once a manufacturer develops a successful product with soluble fibre others will follow. Suppose soluble fibre is added to all drinks including wine, milk and mineral water. We could get enormous amounts and we don't know long-term effects. It could cause blockage of the intestines or it might absorb other substances from the gut. We need dietary fibre mops of iron, calcium and magnesium and removes them from the body."

The problem is the Government doesn't want to control it. It wants to leave it to the industry. We scientists are cautious about it but the marketing people see it as a wonderful opportunity."

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The future of the monarchy – is this how the nation should decide?



Monarchists have tended to shy away from open conflict with republicans. Walter Bagehot feared the dangers of "letting daylight in upon magic". Now, says Vernon Bogdanor, "we have to consider practical reasons for keeping the Crown"



The biggest debate on the future of the Royal Family takes place on television tonight. Michael Gove on the importance of public opinion

A televised contest in a Birmingham amphitheatre may be an appropriate way for determining the merits of a plucky challenger against Wolf or Hunter on a Saturday evening, but is it a suitable arena for testing the relative strength of republican and royalist arguments?

Tonight, an audience of 3,000 brought together in the Birmingham National Exhibition Centre to debate the future of their sovereign. Carlton TV expects *Monarchy – The Nation Decides* to reach thousands more whom it hopes will ring in to vote. As a way of deciding between Roundheads and Cavaliers it is more civilised than Marston Moor but some

royalists will think only just.

Monarchists have, in the past, tended to shy away from open conflict with republicans. They feared, in the words of Walter Bagehot, the David Starkey of the Victorian age, the dangers of "letting daylight in upon magic". To even engage in debate about the future, or the operation, of the monarchy was not only to infringe its dignity but contribute to its decline. The monarchy depended on mystique and habits of deference to survive which open debate could only erode. To argue with republicans was to get in a wrestling-match with a chimney-sweep.

Although few would subscribe to the High Tory attitude of Evelyn Waugh, who refrained from voting on the ground that he would not presume to instruct his sovereign on her choice of advisers, many of those most ardently attached to the Royal Family are those least inclined to intervene.

But the most sophisticated of modern monarchists feel that such an attitude is no longer tenable. An institution may be most vulnerable when it attempts to adapt but according to Vernon Bogdanor, "the history of the British monarchy is the history of adaption".

Bogdanor, author of *The Monarchy and the Constitution* and an informal adviser to the Prince of Wales maintains, "We have to learn to defend the monarchy in rational terms. In 1956, four years after the Queen's accession, an opinion poll showed that 35 per cent of the population believed that the sovereign had been chosen by God. Now, because of scandal and the spirit of the age the magical monarchy no longer exists, we have to consider practical reasons for keeping the Crown."

The historian John Grigg agrees. "Force of circumstance is such that those who, temperamentally, would have considered it impertinent to intervene in any debate about the Royal Family, who would have been uptight, now feel moved to speak up."

Establishment figures such as Grigg and Bogdanor would never admit it, but part of the reason for their preparedness to fight is the relatively poor quality of Household Cavalier hitherto. Glossy, in every sense of the word, magazine editors, pastel popular novelists and clever tabloid correspondents have, in the past, stepped into the gap created by others' fastidiousness. While republicanism has had academics such as Stephen Haseler, financial authorities like Philip Hall and ground-breaking journalists like Andrew Morton, the royal cause has, by default, been defended by the twice, the tight and the terrible.

Finer feelings aside, there has always been an ostrich tendency within monarchist circles inclined to believe that doing nothing was better than doing anything and the monarchy had no need to win allies or debates. Some of the stiffer courtiers are thorough-going ostriches but neither the Queen nor the Prince of Wales share such an analysis. Both recognise that the monarchy depends upon public support for its survival. They might acknowledge that many of their subjects

in constitutional reform an outlet for the energies which might once have been directed to beating the bomb or saving the whale.

The corrosive cocktail of vulgar gossip and not-so-vulgar Marxism which republicans fling at the monarchy requires royalists to use modern methods. They are defending an institution which speaks to older values but whose worth endures. Monarchists should regard debates like this evening's as a threat and more an opportunity. With so many of the voters who were polled by MORI before the debate uncertain what the monarchy is any longer for, the principal reasons for its continuance can be gauged and brought home to an audience sated on scandal.

Monarchists inclined to melancholy by the headline results of the MORI poll which suggest less than half the public expect the institution to survive another 50 years should take heart from the willingness of figures such as John Grigg and Vernon Bogdanor to join a Charge of the

republicans on the Labour benches who do not have the courage to reveal their levelling instincts but their reluctance is, in itself, an indication of the real strength of republican feeling in the country.

Given that the situation more than a hundred years ago was arguably more perilous than now the survival of the monarchy should give royalists hope.

The clear and present danger to the monarchy then was met, firstly, by the energy and rhetorical spirit of Disraeli. He appealed above the heads of politicians to the Crown as a source of authority. It was unsullied by the sordid nature of the political process with which he, in particular, was so familiar.

Disraeli argued that Britain had been spared revolution and guaranteed stability because "the wisdom of our forefathers placed the prize of supreme power without the sphere of human passions". Strip away the Victorian grandiloquence and the message is, if anything, even more relevant to our age than Disraeli's. With

much of what used to be civil society now the province of the partisan there is an appetite for the independent voice yearning for leadership unclouded by obligations, in fact. With so many institutions, from hospital trusts to *Question Time* crudely politicised, the public are only too ready to respond to voices which speak with a regard for posterity, not party.

The monarchy did not, however, rely on others to do all the work when Disraeli expressed himself in the past. Queen Victoria allowed herself to assume the role of focus of imperial loyalty and exerted herself, so far as she was able, to give the new sense of British greatness a physical expression.

It was also in Victoria's reign that another, increasingly important, form of royal authority assumed prominence. What the historian Frank Prochaska has termed "the welfare monarchy" has its roots in the philanthropic energy of the Queen's Consort, Prince Albert.

It found a social expression in the progressive tone of Edward VII's court, not least in his championing of Jewish interests. It also found a charitable expression in the activities encouraged by Edward VIII. Prochaska has pointed out that when Edward called for "something to be done" after seeing the scale of poverty in South Wales he expected someone else to do it, but his words carried weight. A speech of his in 1922 did lead to the establishment of 2,900 self-help and charitable projects to aid the unemployed.

The fullest flowering of the Welfare monarchy, however, has occurred during the reign of the current Queen and its most assiduous servant has been the Prince of Wales. Through the Prince's Trust, which works with society's excluded to foster enterprise in place of dependence, he has been instrumental in creating some 60,000 jobs. It is an achievement, Prochaska argues, "which no venture capitalist can top".

There are no shortage of powerful arguments for monarchists to make and no shortage of impressive advocates, from across the political spectrum, to make them but unless the arguments are taken out of the broadsheets and onto broadcasts then the republicans will continue their slow advance. The telephone poll and the TV debate may not be the ground which royalist gladiators might pick but they should trust to the quality of their case to transcend the heat and dust.

Monarchy – The Nation Decides on ITV at 8.30 tonight.

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مركز الأصل

'I look forward to Blair taking over'

The liberal American economist J.K. Galbraith believes that Tony Blair is young, intelligent and original. Interview by Quentin Letts

Old people are not expected to be tall, but the economist John Kenneth Galbraith, 88, stands 6ft 7in in his socks. Someone once wondered if his great height moulded his placid nature — on the ground that being so visible in a crowd, Galbraith had to mind his manners.

Any rugby referee will tell you that second-row forwards, though beaniepole tall, like to misbehave once they have their heads down in the scrum. Galbraith's gentleness is also misleading. He is, certainly, a courteous man who speaks with an almost Jimmy Stewart drawl and greets callers to his Boston home with the grace of a lost age. In his day-to-day gatherings he is a sweetie. In political conversation, however, he will happily try to place your argument over his knee and cane it — which, incidentally, is just what he feels like doing with President Clinton for signing last year's welfare reform Bill. He talks to Clinton occasionally, but right now he is cross with the President and is not reluctant to admit it.

Galbraith belongs to that pantheon of American liberalism which includes FDR, the Kennedy brothers, Martin Luther King and the Margaret Thatcher of American politics, Eleanor Roosevelt. He has been involved in public life since the Second World War, when Roosevelt put him in charge of price control. Stints followed as presidential adviser, Ambassador to India, Harvard professor, and, in due course, *bête noire* emeritus of the American Right.

His books are held to have had an influence on the American political debate, specifically on the Left-leaning East and West Coast establishment. Inclusiveness, social conscience, environmentalism, anti-militarism, pro-minorityism; these cosy, possibly unattractive inclinations have all found their intellectual justification, and sometimes their root, in the concise, elegant prose of this lofty Canadian.

His 30 or so books have included *The Affluent Society* in 1958, *The Industrial State* in 1967, *The Age of Uncertainty* (1971), *The Anatomy of Power* (1983) through to his latest offering, *The Good Society* (Sinclair-Stevenson). Throughout, America's brainiacs have sat at his feet, earnestly taking notes, nodding their heads and thinking the world of their master in liberalism.

Mention the name Galbraith in most New York City salons today and eyes open wide in admiration. "You mean you have met him?" ask fiftysomething women, recalling cerebral college girl crushes. From Galbraith, arguably, the last generation of East Coast "Wasps" (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants) learnt that it was somehow noble to toss away the privilege and rank for which predecessors had worked — only to see their place taken by more self-regarding ethnic groups.

Galbraith was born and reared in Iona Station, a dusty Ontario township where his father farmed. Young Kenneth took an agriculture degree from the University of Toronto but it was not until he reached the University of California, Berkeley, as a masters student in the early Thirties that his political batteries were charged. "A very exciting time," he recalls. "I was therein the depths of the Great Depression and I plugged in. No one expected the system to survive. It was unknown for anyone, save one or two of the older professors, to be in support of the status quo."

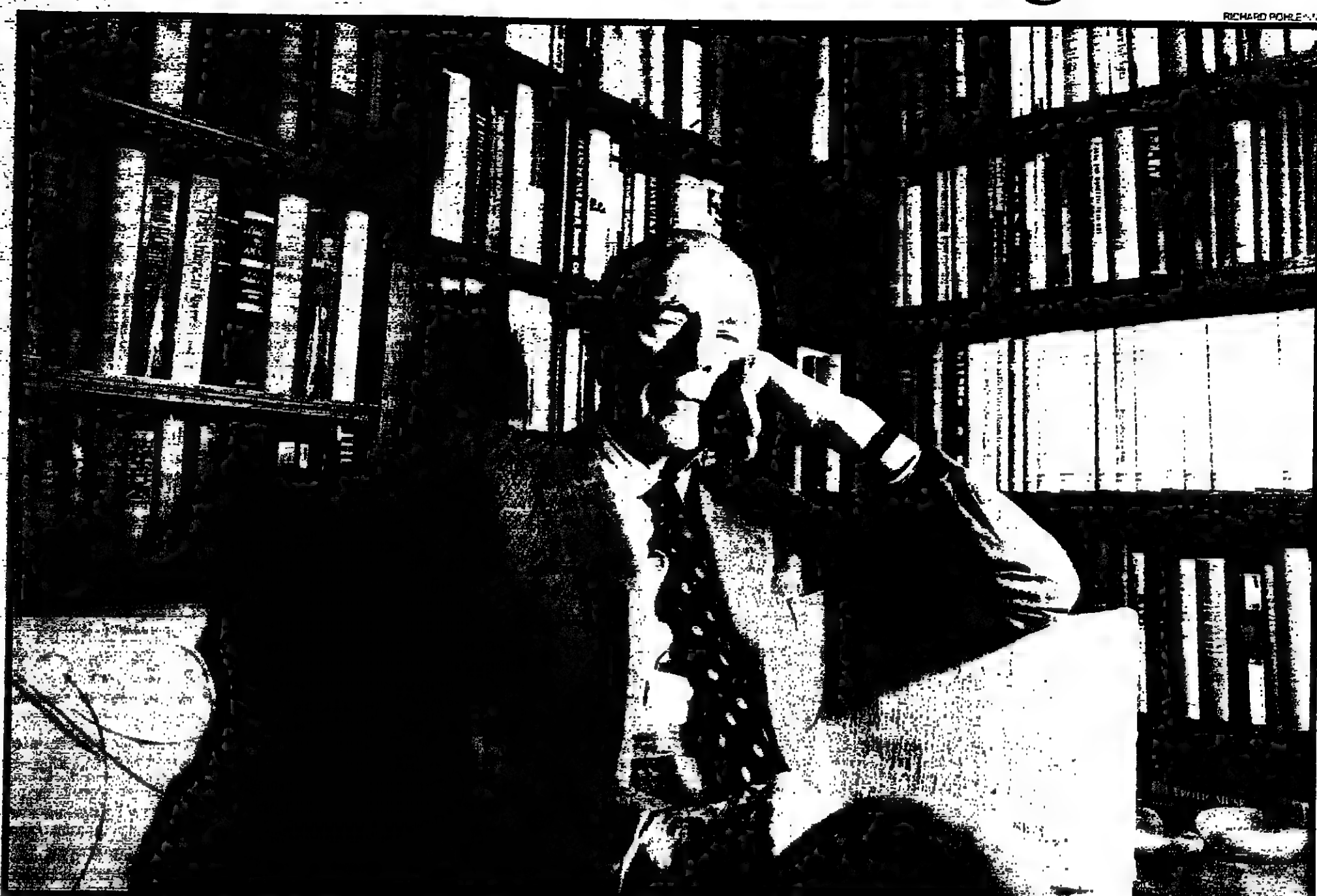
In *The Good Society* Galbraith presents his definition for the perfect polity, where people can choose not to work, where the rich take high taxes on the chin, where immigrants are welcomed and healthcare is plentiful. Workers must be permitted to organise, people must embrace the necessity of big government, and the nation-state must yield to the higher call of internationalism, of goodwill to the poor of the world.

Quite a lot of that, one realises, is now hard set in American political life. Galbraith was spurred to publish *The Good Society* when Newt Gingrich swept into Congress with his *Contract for America* — in his hall is a sticker that reads BOOT NEWT — but despite the Right's loud demands for less government, Galbraithism thrives. In modern America idleness is frequently rewarded, taxes have risen, racism, whatever the Rev Jesse Jackson might have us believe, is a great deal less common, and there are ranks of apparatchiks and regulations in place to ensure that private enterprise is checked, if not throttled.

Galbraith does not explain how a United States so blessed is at the same time so divided and, arguably, less at ease with itself than it was in the Depression. "The US does have a terrible problem with the urban poor," he concedes, before moving on.

Humour seeps out of the man, normally via understatement. On saying something amusing he leans back, his eyes closed slightly, and a faint smile played at the corners of his mouth. It gave him the look of a tortoise that has just bitten on a leaf of fresh lettuce and finds it good. I asked about Mountbatten, whom he knew. "An attractive man," says Galbraith, "moderately intelligent but not brilliant, more than adequately self-confident." The eyes did their adequately self-confident. "The eyes did their tortoise act. Despite his love of big government, he holds in awe the way the Raj was conducted with such a small complement of British civil servants. "Did you know that the British ran India with fewer people than Harvard employs in its dining halls?"

Galbraith was sent to India by John Kennedy, whom he had taught at Harvard, and who was so addicted to Galbraith's succinct, sardonic dispatches that he would ask the White House staff to let him see the ambassador's cables, even when they were addressed to other parties. After Kennedy's death Galbraith remained in Washington, advising President



"My advice to Tony Blair is that the welfare state was the great civilising force of the 20th century, that it made for the survival of capitalism and that it is still to be defended and protected"

Johnson. In the Seventies, the Carter Administration made contact, as has the current presidential circle, although Galbraith is not entirely convinced by Clinton. Kennedy and Clinton, he surmises, "both had a shrewd view of their political opposition, a measure of which was the fact that he didn't avoid the word." The L-word, indeed, rarely falls from Bill Clinton's lips.

For Clinton read Blair? Galbraith is a pin-up in Labour Party circles. He met Tony Blair recently and "maintains friendly connections." "I know many of Blair's people and I look forward to his taking over the British Government," he says. "Mr Blair seems to be young, intelligent and original. My advice to him is that the welfare state was the great civilising force of the 20th century, that it made for the survival of capitalism and that it is still to be defended and protected." For Blair's information, Galbraith once also said that there was "no hope for liberals if they seek only to imitate conservatives, and no function either."

He has known most of the British Prime Ministers since the Second World War, although not Margaret Thatcher, alas — what good spectator sport that encounter could have made. Thatcherites may not be surprised to learn that he is particularly fond of Sir Edward Heath. "Ted was here at Harvard the other day. He tends to become excited about the details of an argument, while I remain calmer."

He writes every day, rising early and working in his downstairs study with its photographs of presidents and statesmen he knew. There is one of Jackie Kennedy astride an elephant in India.

There is a plan for another book, which will describe his encounters with world leaders — "an exercise in name-dropping". He is bullish about the calibre of modern politicians. "In my lifetime there has been an enormous improvement in the quality of people in public life," he says. "One should not be in any doubt about that. People like Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Warren G. Harding, they would be lost in the problems of today. In the war years I knew every member of Congress and the Senate. The Democrats were selected by the northern machines. Some of them were people whose party discipline depended on the fact that an indictment was always possible."

He was twice persuaded to think about running for the Senate, but it came to nothing. The first time he pulled out on the eve of the election because he realised that if he won it would have meant knocking out a black man from the House. The other time he was in mid-book and, having made the emotional investment, he felt he could not drop it. Could he have made it as an elected politician? "I have a certain surplus of energy, make speeches with ease and a minimum of thought," he says. "I would have had the patience for dealing with my constituents. Whether I would have had the patience for dealing with my colleagues is another matter."

Harvard in 1997 is a long call from the Berkeley of the Thirties. The status quo is now so soft-bellied that there is little for left-wing academics properly to protest about, and one of the dividends of the liberal advance has been the awful daily mugging of personal freedom, rife on Ivy League campuses, that is political correctness. Galbraith declined to see anything wrong with it. "On the whole I conform to the language of the moment," he says, suddenly strangely cold. "I do it without much thought." He was "not in the least bothered" by the possible curbs on free speech or thought. But then the eyes did their tortoise trick. "I adhere to the comment made in the *St Louis Dispatch* that one should comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable."

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Reducing Risks - Protecting People

Lights go out for New York tycoon

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IN NEW YORK

Dark ages of the grand old party

Republicans fear capture by the Religious Right, says Tim Hames

It will be a peculiar celebration when Republican members of Congress gather in Washington today. For the first time since the 1920s, they have retained control of Capitol Hill. Thirty-two states, comprising nearly three-quarters of all Americans, have Republicans as their governors. A radical new system of public welfare, designed by conservatives, has replaced the model pioneered by Democratic Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson. Despite that, the atmosphere is subdued, even depressed. The architect of the great landslide of 1994 — Newt Gingrich — stands embattled by ethics charges, hanging on to his post as Speaker of the House by the skin of his teeth. The man who led the other side of that triumph — Robert Dole — now resides in the Florida sunshine, not the Senate or the White House.

To some, there is a crisis that goes much deeper. William Kristol, Editor of the leading conservative magazine, *The Weekly Standard*, complains that the Republicans no longer have a "compelling national agenda". Along with other conservative intellectuals, he spent the new

year faced by American liberalism, now that it has been abandoned even by a Democratic President. The Republicans' real dilemma is how to implement that programme so that it is uniquely associated with them, rather than see the spoils shared by the ever-opportunistic White House.

Most of the programme that energised both conservatives and the American public two years ago remains popular and is still waiting to be implemented. The proof of that lies in Bill Clinton's willingness to adopt almost all of its key aspects to ensure his re-election. In 1995, Republican attempts to pass a balanced-budget amendment to the American Constitution fell by one vote in the Senate. Thanks to the results in November, there is now the necessary two-thirds majority to enact it this year. In 1995, Dole and Gingrich forced President Clinton to offer more than \$100 billion in tax reductions, but turned this down as insufficient for their more zealous backbenchers in the House of Representatives. This year they should hold the President to his promise to cut taxes, but couple it with a radical drive to simplify the hideously complex, seven-million-word US tax system, along the lines of the flat tax that Steve Forbes vigorously promoted in the Republican primary contest.

Reagan's coalition could be recreated by tax cuts

Office despite all his other baggage, but economic policy — low taxation, small government, high growth — remains conservative-occupied territory. It is also the factor that glues the various elements of the Republican coalition together. Fundamentalists Christians are as hostile to Washington in their wallets as they are to "progressive" education in their schools. Furthermore, tax cuts can be designed to promote policy objectives, such as supporting family life, dear to the hearts of social conservatives.

Against the backdrop of a booming economy, and with a Democratic President favouring tax relief for the middle classes, the 15 per cent tax cut plan did not make much headway in 1996 — and Bob Dole was hardly a convincing advocate. All the evidence at state level is that those Republican governors who have successfully reduced tax and spending levels have reaped rich electoral rewards.

The worst mistake the Republicans could make during their present depression would be to abandon the principles of the Contract with America and seek instead some novel ideas simply because of one presidential defeat. To achieve their ambitious reforms in the next Congress, Republicans will require at least some co-operation from Bill Clinton. This will require compromise on detail and mean sharing the political credit. That may hurt the short-term feelings of American conservatives, but it will cause more long-term pain to American liberals.

These who favour "empowerment conservatism", such as Kristol and last year's vice-presidential candidate Jack Kemp, fear their party will become an electoral ghetto, inhospitable to those beyond its core membership, incapable of presidential victory and hence denied access to complete political power.

Yet despite the current fashion for despair in Washington, the death of the Republican Revolution and the demise of the Reagan coalition have been greatly exaggerated. The American Right does not lack a compelling national programme — or if it does, that problem pales into insignificance compared with those

overreaching themselves, and by the tactics adopted by Bill Clinton to reposition himself as a man of the Centre. The celebration that counts in Washington will be held in two weeks' time, when the President offers Americans his second inaugural address.

Some Republicans foresee permanent alienation from the mainstream electorate. Ronald Reagan's greatest achievement was to forge a three-part coalition from blue-collar social conservatives (mostly from the Mid-West), religiously inspired conservatives (predominantly in the American South), and economic libertarians (in suburbs everywhere). The party's image, it is feared, is now that of intolerant Southern evangelical Protestants. As a result, Bill Clinton made enormous advances through-out suburbia last November, with high-income women in particular deserting to the Democrats in droves.

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Piped music

MUSICAL rarities from 50 years' worth of classical and rock archives have been ruined in a flood caused by burst pipes at the British Academy of Song Writers and Composers in London, the largest composer trade association.

Handwritten correspondence from Noel Coward is now smudged, soggy and illegible; his letter accepting the presidency of the academy is believed to be beyond repair. A Mapplethorpe print of

the singer Peter Gabriel looks like a half-faded poppydum.

"What we need is some remedial angel," said Amanda Harcourt, rock architect, yesterday. "We're wading through water here to get to our desks. The lights and electricity don't work, the computers are soddan and cracks are appearing all over the building."

Photographs of Paul and Linda McCartney with Liza Minnelli, of John Lennon and Yoko Ono, and of Yehudi Menuhin cowering with the Bee Gees are feared lost, along with Lennon's original academy membership certificate.

But of more pressing concern are the entry tapes for the Song for Europe competition, arriving in every post in time for Terry Wogan's patter at the final in March. "The Nucleo nominations will be arriving soon as well," said Harcourt, "and we're wading around in galushes with nowhere to put them."

● A smear of tubed journalists hurried off to France yesterday in search of the feverish MP Jerry Hayes, who was rumoured to be staying with his family at Disneyland, Paris. Never short of inspira-



The ads that detract

The message of the new Tory campaign is failure — but whose?

They look pretty sad. Young enough to have a baby but definitely past their prime: frown-lined, activated, mouths downturned, bad hair day visible behind the fat red print at brow level ("New Labour"). Above the lower level of print ("New Failure"), we see that Mr Miserable suffers from an Adam's apple so prominent as to cause suspicion of hyperthyroidism, and that Mrs Miserable is wearing an unseasonal bare-necked top. I feel cold just looking at it.

Both have the deep, dark hopeless eyes of baby seals about to be clubbed. The mother is weeping red ink. Brian Mawhinney thinks that the sight of this family will frighten us all into voting Conservative, on the principle that the electorate always keeps light hold of nurse for fear of finding something worse.

This is the big one, the first campaign of election year. Thought and money and Saatchi magic have been poured into it with a lavishness born of desperation: the very models were made to sign written undertakings that they will not reveal their identities. It would never do for them to be photographed grinning, winking, kissing the cheek, or voting Lib Dem. The best that aficionados of political nonsense can hope for is that in years to come the infant, too young to sign, will turn up on *Midweek*, revealing that he was the 1997 Labour-failure baby.

I started at them for a few moments, trying to be receptive to the message. Poor young couple: we are familiar with these faces: this look of grumpy black-and-white reportage despair. The word "failure" beneath them triggers instant associations. We see their small business going bust after years of struggle. They lost their house, bought at a high price during Nigel Lawson's fake boom: they owe the bank tens of thousands in negative equity. They will end up separated, in bed-and-breakfast hotels with no cooker, and the baby will grow up malnourished, with one of the old diseases now creeping back into Britain: TB or rickets.

Or they will be put on one of the worst council estates, where baby will become a drug-runner and — if he lives long enough — end up in one of Michael Howard's new secure units for 12-year-olds. In that fleeting first moment of seeing the poster we think "Poor dear! Victims of the recession, and now the recovery has come too

late because they will never catch up on their debts". All these notions chase through the mind immediately, because it is a good photograph expressing a familiar terror.

The only trouble is, Dr Mawhinney, that nobody automatically links all these things with Her Majesty's Opposition. If you are scrupulously fair-minded, you will associate the family's plight with plain bad luck. Far more probably, you will associate it with the fact that Britain has had 18 solid years of... Conservative government. The only personal grudge these people can possibly have against Labour is that back in the winter of discontent the power once went off when Slade were on *Top of the Pops*. As an example of shooting yourself accurately in the foot, this poster takes some beating.

There is a received idea that advertising rules the world: that such people as Steve Hilton, the Saatchi man who invented this ad, are brilliant manipulators who understand the public mind. This is particularly easy to believe when you are actually with advertising creatives, because they are such good company. They are boundlessly optimistic and confident, with the kind of simple fazing energy that magnetically attracts and comforts ordinary, hesitant, thoughtful people. They talk with a beguiling blend of pop psychology and hard-nosed machismo (as in "Let's nuke the opposition with a compassion offensive"). They make good jokes. They simplify things. It is easy to see why people from the real world, whose lives are enmeshed in necessary compromises and a million shades of grey, find solace in the company of adfolk.

They would do well, though, to use a longer spoon. This quick, clever, competitive profession hates to do anything straightforward ("Buy Soap — It Gets You Clean"). They want to be clever. And "clever" advertising, I submit, scores as many own goals as real ones. It is fun to look at, beautifully presented and zestful: but every

day millions of people look at these clever ads and think thoughts completely different from those intended. As the Arab proverb says, "The camel driver has his thoughts, and the camel he has his." Independently of the camel driver at the agency, we camels think "naïf" or "expensive" or "silly" or "I love that ad — which was it for, I never notice?" We watch shampoo advertisements and think "nice sweater", and coffee-bean commercials thinking "nice legs". Sometimes we are alienated, offended. To offer Gold Blend coffee to a male visitor is now equivalent to dropping a shoulder-strap and doing a *Bienvienda Buck* post. Chaste women do well to put it in a plain canister. Certain cars, mechanically excellent, are now so identified with spilt bimbo that men find them too embarrassing to drive. My husband confides that he could never bring himself to drive "anything that Ruby Wax might have been in". Even the most technically brilliant advertisements backfire: I like the occasional half-pint of Guinness, but can no longer order it in an English pub because of a painful sense that these days it is only drunk by appalling posers in black polo-neckts.

You might say that these are targeted campaigns, so it does not matter if they annoy those outside the target area: but this is hardly a safe way for politicians to think. They need everyone, of every age and type. The cleverest ad, the greater its potential to look silly and annoying, and in an election year, being gratuitously silly and annoying is not wise. Sometimes the opposite happens, and a negative image is strangely attractive. In *Black Mischief*, Evelyn Waugh caricatured this effect when a population-control campaign showed two pictures: a small family with healthy children and the wife reading the newspaper, versus a huge tribe of skinned and mentally deformed infants led by a bowed, struggling mother. In the story, the locals condemn the first picture and aspire

to identify with the second family: hard-working woman, very fertile, plenty of progeny, one "very mad, very holy".

The modern equivalent of this was the 1980s government scare campaign showing a thin, haggard, scruffy figure warning that "Heroin screws you up". A glance at some CD covers could have told the perpetrators that thin, haggard, scruffy and tragic was a very fashionable way for teenagers to look. This season's drink-driving campaign shows a composed girl, a bit scared but nonetheless interesting-looking, talking about her averagely equivocal relationship with the boyfriend who crashed the car. "They're still together," say the onlookers, swigging their sloppos with gusto. "Isn't that nice? And can't they do tremendous things with plastic surgery these days?"

Or take the "demon eyes" poster. I have to tell you that some of us girls thought Mr Blair looked very attractive. In a Heathcliffian sort of way, without his Bamby eyes. And at least one floating male voter said that it made him more able to believe that this Labour PM really would be capable of getting tough with unions and left-wingers. To be fair, Labour made exactly the same mistake when it portrayed Norman Lamont looking rather fabulous as *Veznan*, its agency obviously forgot that *Balmain* is a goodie, a superhero. But Labour has learnt its lesson, and is now very sensibly lying low and allowing puerile Tory advertising to do the job of making its leaders look statesmanlike, restrained and even sexy.

How many more months of this? After "New Labour — New Danger", we now have "New Labour — New Failure". What next? Perhaps "New Labour — New Neighbour" (picture of savage lesbian in leathers with hammer-and-sickle on helmet). Then "New Labour — New Manager" (with a dog in it, obviously, labelled "Adoption social worker"). If it runs on till May we shall be down to "New Labour — New Puncture", with Mr and Mrs Miserable Sesi-Eyes struggling to change a wheel (marked "Social Chapter") on the broken-down national car while the rest of the world roars past in the fast lane.

All of these images, naturally, will combine to give the electorate the impression that the Labour Party is rather fun and highly electable. Or at least less silly, prodigal and desperate than some.

Libby Purves

A Lib-Lab pact may sink Blair

Voters don't like coalitions, says Woodrow Wyatt

By November 1961, the Tories had held office for 12 years. The Profumo affair and Harold Macmillan's retirement through illness were yet to come. Confidence that Labour would win the election due in 1964 was not strong. In 1959, under Hugh Gaitskell, we in the Labour Party had fought a better campaign than our opponents but were defeated by the fear that Labour would damage the economy. As the joint Liberal and Labour vote had exceeded that of the Tories, I proposed that there should be a Lib-Lab pact in seats where the Tories had won with a minority of votes. Labour would run no candidate where the Liberals had come second, and vice versa.

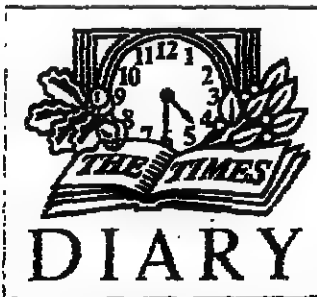
A poll on November 27, 1961 showed that 56 per cent of Labour supporters agreed with me, and only 27 per cent disagreed, and 40.5 per cent of Liberal supporters approved. But Gaitskell, strongly disliked my proposal. Angry, he told me I had acutely embarrassed him by airing it. This was because we were known to be close associates and it was often assumed that I was expressing his views. Nevertheless, I persisted, publishing a very long article in the *New Statesman* of January 26, 1962, containing tables showing how the scheme would work. If the local Labour and Liberal parties arranged to back the candidate with the best chance, there ought to be a Lib-Lab majority in the Commons. Jo Grimond, the Liberal leader, was convinced of the scheme's merits, but Gaitskell and the Labour national executive were further enraged. Morgan Phillips, the Labour Party's general secretary, was instructed to write to tell me that I must drop my advocacy of a Lib-Lab pact or be expelled. So I dropped it.

Many people prominent in the Labour Party today probably feel the same way about the current discussions between Labour and the Liberal Democrats. The fact that they are taking place shows Tony Blair's lack of confidence in Labour being able to form a government on its own. The Callaghan Government could not have survived so long without its pact with the Liberals. I understand Mr Blair's reasoning. He suspects that despite his big lead in the opinion polls, he too will be unable to sustain a government without Liberal backing, and he wants to settle the terms in advance. Mr Blair would regard his not becoming prime minister this year as a personal catharsis.

Yesterday Paddy Ashdown said on the BBC's *Today* programme he would not rule out his becoming a member of a Blair Cabinet. Of course not. That would be his first demand, with one or two other Liberal Democrats to join him. Presumably he would also insist on his pet scheme for increased income tax devoted entirely to education, which would make a hole in Mr Blair's claim that Labour would not raise taxes. But the biggest liability Mr Blair risks taking on is the Liberal Democrats' attitude to Europe. Mr Ashdown vehemently maintains that the Westminster Parliament must inevitably become increasingly subordinate to European institutions. Not only does he wish to be part of the single currency, but he is a passionate federalist as well. You know a man by the company he keeps, and Mr Blair keeps close company with Mr Ashdown, to the extent even of co-ordinating their attacks on John Major. Mr Blair's declaration that he would fight for British interests in Europe is hollow, since it is coupled with his determination to agree with the majority rather than be isolated, as Mr Major is prepared to be.

Hugh Gaitskell used to say that people voted Liberal only because they were too snobbish to vote Labour. Clearly Mr Blair has persuaded Mr Ashdown that it is now more snobbish to convert with Labour, led by a product of Eton and Oxford, than with Mr Major, who left school at 16 and understands poverty from his own experience. Blair has worked the theme that because he is an admirer of Margaret Thatcher, there is not much difference between voting for the Conservatives and voting for new Labour. But joining with the Liberal Democrats is an electoral mistake.

Much has changed since 1962, when I advocated such an alliance. Basically this is a two-party country which prefers one-party government, strong enough to make essential difficult decisions, to potentially weak coalitions. The prospect of proportional representation, which comes closer with the partnership of Blair and Ashdown, is more likely to lose votes than to gain them — as is their shared addiction to overturning institutions for no real benefit. The proposed separate assembly for Scotland, with tax-raising powers, would inevitably lead to disputes between Westminster and Edinburgh, eventually fuelling a Scottish demand for complete independence and the break-up of the United Kingdom. Under Blair and Ashdown, this issue would be decided solely by the Scots, ignoring the English, Welsh and Northern Irish, who form the overwhelming majority of British people. The excess baggage with which Mr Blair has burdened himself lessens his chances of winning the election, and it is now too late for him to shed it.



tion where a grubby story is concerned, they set about trying to lure Mickey Mouse, and Donald Duck, to go to mingle with the crowds. Back in London, sub-editors were desperate to combine the story about Jerry Hayes with the one about Mr MP Hugh Dole, talking to the Lib Dems and to Labour. They all wanted to use the headline "Gays and Dykes".

Read Nigel's

PEERING waistwards after Christmas, Norman Lamont has decided to diet. He has chosen the Hay Diet, which basically involves not mixing meat and potatoes. "I don't believe it will work," says Lamont, who claims that he still fits snugly into his suits, "but I read all these diet things in the newspaper, and thought I might

buy a book and try one out." Lamont, who will be standing for the Tories in Harrogate at the election, denies putting on weight recently, despite not being the sort to fold his napkin when the puddings come round. "I put on my weight when I was younger," he says, "and since then, it has been pretty stable. It only really adjusts according to elections."

Dare we?

BBC NEWS programmes were characteristically wet on Sunday about the Jerry Hayes affair. Not since the Conservative MP Ste-



phen Milligan died after indulging in a sexual experiment has there been so much hand-wringing over what to tell viewers and listeners. In the case of Milligan, it was 18 hours after the story of his death broke before the BBC felt able to divulge that he had been found naked but for women's underwear.

The story of Hayes's platonic affair with a gay teenager was touched upon briefly in morning bulletins, and raised in David Frost's breakfast interview with John Major, but disappeared altogether later in the day. It was a potentially defamatory story, says the BBC by way of explanation. "And we didn't feel we could carry it on any further. So it was decided the story wasn't really strong enough for the main bulletins."

Cashing in

AFTER 30 years out in the cold, the prep-school nameplate manufacturer J & J Cash Ltd. has again received a Royal Warrant of Appointment. The company lost the Queen's Royal Warrant in 1964 when Prince Charles was 15 and Princess Anne was 13. A surfeit of nameplates had accumulated at Buckingham Palace, and they could in any case be folded over and recycled for Princes Andrew and Edward. J & J Cash lost



Young royalty: taped

business from the Windsors. A new generation of young royals has secured a warrant from the Prince of Wales, however. Princes William and Harry and Princess Beatrice have created the demand. Princess Eugenie is sure to follow on. The company is delighted and Bill Cash, MP, whose forebears started the company, applauds the warrant: "A marvellous tribute not only to Cash's nameplates but also to the numb sewing fingers of mothers up and down the land."

P.H.S



Coward: soggy



IT STARTED IN TEARS

Why Dr Mawhinney should be negative and proud of it

New Year, new opportunity, new launch and new embarrassments arrived for the Conservative Party this week. Just as Tory posters appeared on the streets showing an unfortunate couple bawling their decision to vote Labour, another mother and father — Mr and Mrs Jerry Hayes — went to ground to escape embarrassing press revelations. Then there surfaced the unlikely partnership of Hugh Dykes and Jack Straw, taking further shine off the party's much-needed and crisply planned advertising.

Dr Mawhinney did not well serve his own cause when he was accused on the *Today* programme of negative campaigning. Instead of saying that he had a justifiably negative view of the Labour Party and wished to communicate this to the British people, he said that his advertisement was a "very positive message". This sort of duplicity is unnecessary and unsustainable.

The central Tory strategy, however slim its prospects, has to remain where it has been for more than a year: its reliance is on economic recovery and a claim that Labour will ruin it. The second part of that strategy requires an inevitably negative message. Negative advertising is also the most proven method of appealing to floating voters. To insist on avoiding the N-word only infuriates voters, who are already inclined to see Conservative politicians as untrustworthy. Nor did the Prime Minister assist the re-launch. He chose his hour-long platform of an interview with David Frost to say little.

Instead, therefore, front backbenchers have been making the news, and those who want to cause maximum damage to the Conservative Party have chosen their timing well. Max Clifford, the publicist representing Mr Hayes's alleged boyfriend, waited

until the Prime Minister revisited family values before revealing what they might sometimes mean in practice. Mr Straw, having conducted a long and tortuous courtship with Mr Dykes, chose the first working week of the New Year to announce that the Tory MP, far from thinking constitutional reform dangerous, would become actively involved with Labour and the Liberal Democrats in its design.

The trouble with trying to present politics in black and white — as election campaigns invariably do — is that grey will insist on blurring the edges. The arguments about constitutional reform do not create straight partisan divisions. Many Conservatives, not least the Foreign Secretary and the Chancellor, have been in favour of devolution in the past. Some Tories privately support electoral reform; others would like to see incorporation into domestic law of the European Convention on Human Rights. Mr Major may see electoral advantage in portraying Labour as the party of constitutional-wreckers, but he must also face the fact that many of the Opposition's proposals have been espoused on his own benches, sometimes even in Tory manifestos.

With a non-existent majority, Mr Major is more beholden than ever to his backbenchers. Looking ahead to five months of compulsory Commons attendance culminating in probable defeat at the polls, those MPs are likely to be more fractious than ever. The Ulster Unionists will probably ensure that no vote of confidence is lost between now and May; but the Government's dependence on a minority party, living from day to day, will sap morale. The New Year has begun, but there is little sign yet of a new spirit abroad.

FORWARD IN BELGRADE

Serbia seeks redemption in witty, brave and peaceful protest

Today, the Orthodox Christmas is celebrated — and nowhere more sanguinely than in Belgrade, where tens of thousands of protesting citizens flocked last night to St Sava's Cathedral for a midnight Mass held in decidedly unorthodox circumstances. As they prepared for their 51st straight day of outcrying and outcrying the regime of Slobodan Milosevic, they feel the odds shifting in their favour.

Not only has the battle for democracy in Serbia outgrown its original cause, President Milosevic's refusal to accept Opposition victories in a string of municipal elections; it is at last attracting support from within the hierarchy, which Mr Milosevic cannot so easily pretend to ignore as he has the daily street carnival of crowds equipped with little more than eggs, detergent, snowballs and the cacophony of thousands of whistles, alarm clocks and beaten pans.

Mr Milosevic still appears in firm control of the levers on which he has traditionally relied most closely, the mass media, which is key to retaining the support of rural Serbs, an 80,000-strong cohort of heavily armed paramilitary police whose loyalty he has taken care to purchase, and a manipulable legal system. But to many Serbs, the Church and the Army embody their sense of nationhood far more surely than the apparatus inherited from communism. His grip on both of these is slipping.

The first serious crack came last week when the ruling council of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which notoriously supported Mr Milosevic's drive to carve out a Greater Serbia, turned on him with a blistering public attack for "strangling political and religious freedoms" and "bringing bloodshed" by setting Serb against Serb. It ineffectually demanded the reinstatement of the local election results. The Church can reach where opposition media cannot, and because many country people have remained religious throughout

the communist years, once this message reaches rural pulpits Mr Milosevic's strategy of confining protest to the urban middle classes will be seriously weakened.

Now the Army is edging off the fence. While pointedly refraining from any statement of support for the President, it has so far insisted on its constitutional duty to stay clear of politics. But yesterday General Momcilo Perisic, the Army Chief of Staff, told a student delegation that the Army expected the crisis to be resolved "in the manner employed in democratic countries". For Mr Milosevic, the grave implication is that if he sets on the demonstrators with tanks, as he did in 1991, he will have to call on his special police. Faced by a potential army revolt, they too might hesitate to shoot. For the first time in nine years, Mr Milosevic appears on shakier ground than his opponents.

If he exercised one of the tactical retreats of which he is master, he might yet cling to power. If he reversed the local election fraud, as the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe has demanded, his power would be denied but not destroyed. He would then have nearly a year to plot his strategy for the federal presidential and parliamentary elections.

This is the course the West is pressing on him. There is gain if pressure succeeds, because the cracks in the monolith will widen. But there is gain, too, if it does not. The more he acts as though the removal of a single small brick would bring his house down, the more likely he makes its collapse. By their wit, courage and peaceable conduct, Serbia's students and burghers have shown their determination to effect bloodless reform. They have done much to rebuild Serbia's tarnished reputation; if they win through, it would have a redeeming influence on the intolerant politics of the Balkans. For all these reasons, they deserve moral and political support.

CLASSIC PRIGGERY

Music has room for epigram and epitome as well as epic

The new "crossover" chart for recorded music announced yesterday will provide a separate league table for Dame Kiri Te Kanawa singing Rodgers and Hammerstein, Pavarotti performing with Elton John, and others who sway between recording classical and pop music. At present the mass popularity of such compilations dominates the classical charts and squeezes out the thoroughbred recordings that are new. The crossover chart will enable enterprising music companies to claim the distinction of having issued the most popular opera album, tape or compact disc in history. It will also annoy purists and prigs.

We will hear the familiar complaint that those who cannot take a work of art whole and pure should not nibble at its edges. Such was the opinion of Claudio Abbado when he threatened to sue Deutsche Grammophon for concentrating highlights from the many Mahler symphonies he has conducted on a single compact disc. But his opinion dismayed weaker brothers and sisters who find that a little Mahler goes a long way. Abbado was repeating the cry of intellectual snobs down the ages: a little learning, or culture, is a dangerous thing.

This rhetoric is not just snobbish. It is also unhistorical. Children and beginners in any new field usually start with digests, whether *The Golden Treasury*, *Other Men's Flowers*, *The Greek Anthology*, poems on the Underground, or some modern compilation.

Only dogged enthusiasts would insist that everybody study every word of the Bible (or *Living*) or enjoy every note of Wagner.

Vast swathes of what we call culture has been passed to us in selected soundbites. Much of our classical heritage was preserved by the epitomists of the Hellenistic age. They were the first to feel the growth of recorded literature as a burden. Those old bookmen of Alexandria denounced the "big evil of a big book" and pioneered both small works and the abridgement of long ones. The three-volume novel was a reinvention of the Romantic giants. But even Victorian novelists wrote in short episodes for popular serialisation. In his preface to *The Wings of the Dove*, even Henry James regretted that his publisher had failed to sell serialisation rights: "Sour grapes may at moments fairly intoxicate." And James was not a novelist to short-change readers.

Musicians too have always wanted to make the most of their music, recycling it for all audiences. A hundred best tunes in some form is one of the oldest radio programmes. Henry Wood's first Promenade Concerts consisted of 20 extracts from operas warbled by the divas of the day. The proper criticism of Classic FM is not the brevity of its extracts but the long-windedness of its presenters. Music and culture have many mansions. And there is room in them for the 100 best arias as well as for Bayreuth, and even yet another perfect recording of *La Bohème*.

Police statistics on drink-driving

From Mr J. G. Wishart

Sir, On January 3 you reported that, according to the Association of Chief Police Officers (Acpo), the number of drivers in England and Wales caught drinking and driving over the Christmas period rose by 18 per cent compared with the same period in 1995. What was not stated was the number of all drivers tested. Without this fact, the 18 per cent figure has no validity.

West Mercia Police reported a 35 per cent rise in positive tests. So what? How many sober drivers were tested? Such a presentation of data is meaningless.

The significant fact is that Merseyside Police tested 11,160 drivers and caught 97 (0.87 per cent) — an improvement over 1995, when about 3,700 were tested to catch 135 (3.65 per cent). This is a sensible way to present statistical data.

One week ago, police in Scotland published their Christmas drink-driving results and claimed that the failure rate was "unbelievable" because 69 drivers failed the breath test, an increase of 39 over the same period in 1995. This was widely bemoaned in the media. Yet the final figures show that 164 per cent of tested drivers failed in 1995 and that in 1996 the proportion of a greatly increased number of tested drivers fell to 1.38 per cent. This reduction in percentage was ignored and the larger number of failures condemned.

It is interesting to note that most police forces in England and Wales refused to release data relating to the total number of tests undertaken. Why is this? Are the true percentages falling but numbers of failures increasing because of increasingly larger numbers of drivers tested? Do the police have a hidden agenda and are they attempting to persuade us with suspect data that the present legal limit should be reduced?

May we please have statistical data presented in a proper manner.

Yours faithfully,
J. G. WISHART,
Milton House,
Milton of Balgonie, Glenrothes, Fife,
January 6.

From Professor K. T. V. Grattan

Sir, Whilst you correctly note that the total number of drivers caught drinking and driving is up (by 18 per cent), the underlying figures point, I believe, to two more significant things.

The first is the essential similarity of the failure rate figures in Scotland and Merseyside. These are areas where the largest and the most statistically meaningful numbers of tests were performed. At about 1 per cent, the failure rate was in each case better or, at worst, similar to last year's.

The second is that this implies a pass rate of 99 per cent, in spite of the huge number of motorists inconvenienced by the process in these two areas alone.

Do these figures really justify the need for the "unlettered" powers to stop and test drivers, called for by police chiefs and reported by you, given this clear indication that random testing is, in effect, already with us?

Yours faithfully,
K. T. V. GRATTAN
City University,
School of Engineering,
Northampton Square, ECI.

From HM Coroner,
South Yorkshire (East)

Sir, There is no significant difference between the number of fatal road accidents involving motorists with a blood/alcohol level of 80mg per 100ml or more and those with a level of 50mg per 100ml or more. People are not alerted by less than 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood.

People are affected, sometimes for life, by being "breathalysed", and by consequent disqualification from driving and, not infrequently, employment. Rightly or wrongly, but understandably, such people and their families and friends blame the police for having applied the law by breathalysing them, and I fear that a reduction in the legal limit, and the consequent increase in convictions of motorists, will considerably reduce public goodwill towards the police.

The present law works well. Acpo should realise that any reduction in the present blood/alcohol limit may bring about far more indirect disadvantage than benefit.

Yours faithfully,
STANLEY HOOPER,
HM Coroner,
South Yorkshire (East),
Coroner's Court and Office,
5 Union Street,
Doncaster, South Yorkshire.

Press and politics

From Sir Julian Critchley, MP for Aldershot (Conservative)

Sir, Whether or not Jerry Hayes has had a "relationship" with Paul Stone is of little importance. What is really sickening is the import of this sentence carried in your lead story today: "Mr Stone, now 24, is understood to have received £75,000 for selling his claim to the *News of the World* through the publicist Max Clifford".

If true, what does it tell us of the British press, Mr Stone and, of course, the egregious Mr Clifford?

Yours etc,
JULIAN CRITCHLEY,
House of Commons,
January 6.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Adoption needs and the scapegoating of social workers

From the General Secretary of the Cuckoo Child Welfare Council

Sir, Paul Barker article, "Finding homes for our lost children", December 30, set also letters, January 1) highlighted well some of the misguided and counterproductive views about placing black and mixed-race children in adoptive and foster families.

The 1989 Children Act requires local authorities and voluntary adoption agencies to have regard to religion, race, language and culture when coming to a decision on placement of a child. In practice it can be almost impossible to balance these and other needs, and sometimes "race" has been given an unreasonable priority or a biased interpretation.

However, social workers and adoption panels, in both the statutory and voluntary sectors, are always trying to make decisions which are in the best interests of the child. Indeed the obligation to make the child's interests paramount is the cornerstone of the Children Act: one reason that new adoption legislation is needed is to bring it in line with that Act.

Yours faithfully,
MARY GANDY,
General Secretary,
Cuckoo Child Welfare Council,
120 West Heath Road, NW3,
January 1.

From the Director of the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering

Sir, It was refreshing to read Professor Triselioti's spirited defence (letter, January 1) of British social workers, whose work is accorded greater respect almost everywhere in the world except in their own country.

Our social workers have the unenviable task of balancing the need to protect children against maintaining their right to remain with their own families. Few would thank the State for arranging for children to be permanently removed from their birth parents for adoption because of a failure to provide the resources and sup-

port which would allow them to return to their families.

Indeed the 1989 Children Act requires social workers to work in partnership with parents. For this to work, trust is essential, and a new emphasis on adoption for children in care risks deterring those parents who desperately need help from approaching social workers for fear of permanently losing their children.

Far fewer children now live in children's homes. Over 65 per cent are now placed with foster parents, compared with less than 50 per cent ten years ago. However, for some young people, good quality residential care provides a much needed breathing space after painful rejection, which happens in adoptive homes as well as in foster and birth families, before they are able to risk again the intensity of family life.

Increased demands on social workers together with annual real cuts in funding make the allocation of resources to more adoption work problematic. It is true that too many children still wait too long, but improvements could be achieved without major structural changes. The single most important factor would be to bring forward the Adoption Bill.

Yours sincerely,
FELICITY COLLIER,
Director,
British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering,
Skyline House,
200 Union Street, SE1,
January 2.

From the Senior Director of Barnardo's

Sir, Whilst there is much to debate in Paul Barker's colour-blind adoption policy, his condemnation of the majority of those who work in children's homes as an "odd bunch" with suspect motives operating a "moral cesspit" requires some justification.

Most contemporary children's homes engage people of skill, imagination and persistence, often working

successfully alongside difficult and damaged young people with whom no one else wants to be bothered. Their hours of work are unpopular, their job satisfactions erratic and their pay modest.

There are relatively few children's homes these days, and Barnardo's is as active as any in ensuring that children have families. But good quality residential care will always be essential and the staff who work in it deserve better than Mr Barker's ill-informed comments.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER SINGLETON,
Senior Director,
Barnardo's,
Tanners Lane,
Barkingside, Ilford, Essex,
December 31.

From Mr Rob Davis

Sir, I am an adoptive father of two teenagers who have both been through the children's home system, moving on like moths when the next social worker decided on yet another "placement". Adolescents like these are awkward enough for a "natural" family to deal with at times but doubly so when they carry into that family the baggage of insecurity, low self-esteem and probably no warm bonds with anyone at all.

Once adopted, all help for these children disappears. We who willingly give homes to older children do not require thanks but an acknowledgment that much more needs to be done to counsel, educate and support our families through those periods when every fibre of love and patience is stretched to the limit.

Helping damaged children find themselves in an adoptive family requires first-class resources from committed social workers.

Yours faithfully,
R. G. DAVIS,
Cwmbran,
Llanfairwaterddyn, Knighton, Powys,
December 31.

Nurses' training and patient care

From Mr P. J. Mahaffey, FRCS

Sir, Dr Betty Kershaw, President of the Royal College of Nursing, appears to me desperate to defend the claimed improvements to nursing which the current nurse training scheme, Project 2000, is said to have brought about (letters, December 31).

If she is so keen to drag nursing away from its natural base as a caring, instinctive profession towards one based on science, then let her give scientific evidence that current nurse graduates make better nurses in the sense that we all expect when lying ill in bed. She cannot, because in my view there is none.

On the contrary, ask any long-serving hospital consultant such as myself, or any ward-based nurse senior enough to have a proper perspective, whether nursing is better now than it was before Project 2000. I suggest that the unanimous response will judge that it is infinitely the poorer.

Yours faithfully,
PETER MAHAFFEY
(Plastic and reconstructive surgeon),
Lister Hospital,
Corcoran Mill Lane,
Stevenage, Hertfordshire.

From Mrs M. A. Leary, RGN, SCM

Sir, Nigella Lawson (article, December 26) talked sound common sense. I

am unconvinced by the arguments of Dr Betty Kershaw and Ms Anna Huxtable in favour of academic training for nurses. If nurses are expecting more equality with doctors, such as prescribing for patients, do they not need similar training — or are they supermen/women?

Nurses complete their training in three to four years and are then considered qualified. Doctors on the other hand have five to six years' undergraduate training before the final examination and then have to serve a year in hospital before registration. There follows a minimum of three years' postgraduate work before they are considered anything other than trainees.

Project 2000 now means we have a system of personal care teams assigned to specific patients which can mean that the sister in overall control of a ward may not have the information to answer a simple inquiry about a patient normally in her charge. When visiting, I have frequently seen a group of "trained" nurses sitting chatting at a nurses station apparently oblivious of their patients whom, because of modern ward construction, they are unable to see.

Yours sincerely,
MARGARET A. LEARY,
Windycroft, Brimington,
Chesterfield, Derbyshire.

Buffalo market

From Mr John Raybould

Sir, Let's hope that no underemployed, disgruntled official in Brussels notices your intriguing report, "Buffalo room on English fields" (January 2), in which Mr Bob Palmer, a Warwickshire farmer, says that "The great attraction of [water] buffalo is that they are not covered by the European Union's quota system" (unlike the Jersey cows he previously owned).

Any Eurocrat now tempted to "maximise his bureau" by extending the EU's regulatory arm to reach buffalo in the UK might do well to remember the maxim "If it ain't broke, don't fix it". Rather, we should all congratulate Mr and Mrs Palmer for their entrepreneurship that has apparently produced a prize-winning cheese from their buffalo milk.

Cooking a snook at Brussels's common agricultural policy, Mr Palmer adds: "The only limits on how much milk you can produce are the capacity of your cows and the number of customers willing to buy it." Adam Smith himself could not have described the essence of the market economy more succinctly.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN RAYBOULD,
3 Chestnut Court,
High Street, Newport,
Saffron Walden, Essex,
January 2.

World peace

From Sir Timothy Garden,
Director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs

Sir, It was good to be reminded by Simon Jenkins ("At long last, peace in our time", January 1) that we all have much to be thankful for in the recent decline in "hot wars" between states.

He cast himself as the optimist railing against traditional institutional pessimism. Yet his conclusion, that he is prepared to pay the price "if an occasional civil war is the price of world peace", is itself a counsel of despair.

The international community must continue to look for ways to reduce conflict, and to increase the sum of human happiness. Institutions have a very positive role to play in this task by examining potential future problems and providing timely solutions.

Yours faithfully,
TIM GARDEN,
Director, The Royal Institute of International Affairs,
Chatham House,
10 St James's Square, SW1.

Hair of the dog

From Professor N. C. Craig Sharp

Sir, Your report (January 3) notes that drinking to stave off a hangover may be helpful but not without hazard. According to the *Journal of Addictive Behaviour*, fear of hangovers could explain why some people become alcoholics: they carry on drinking to avoid the unpleasant symptoms.

A Highland friend always maintained that sleep caused hangovers. No matter how much drink he had taken, he never went to bed with the headache. It was only there when he awakened.

Yours faithfully,
CRAIG SHARP,
18 Salisbury Road,
Moseley, Birmingham,
January 3.

Business letters, page 27

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

By any other name

From Mr Graham Ralph

Sir, I feel I should correct the common misapprehension that the student union building at Manchester Metropolitan University (formerly Manchester Polytechnic) was named after Nelson Mandela (report, January 6). The building's full title during the ANC Year of the Woman in 1984 was in fact the "Winnie Mandela Building".

There were moves to drop the name in 1990 when Winnie Mandela's reputation began to suffer. I believe we were one of only two student unions to have "honoured" Mrs Mandela in this way.

There is also no truth in the rumour that the student union building was renamed after Bruce Forsyth because it had a thatched roof.

Yours faithfully,
GRAHAM RALPH
(President, Manchester Polytechnic Students Union, 1988-89),
29 Alfred Road, Gravesend, Kent,
January 6.

Better luck next time

From Professor Emeritus
Brian G. Palmer

Sir, The man behind me at the newsagent's seemed in a hurry to pay for his paper so I politely let him go ahead of me. In fact he also bought an instant lottery ticket of the sort I was about to buy. While I was paying for my purchases he stood busily scratching his card. Joyfully he announced that he had won £200 — and my ticket proved to be a loser.

Manners clearly makyth Man — poorer by £200.

Yours faithfully,
B. G. PALMER,
10 Stevens Lane, Peppard Common,
Henley-on-Thames, Surrey,
January 3.

Time is money

From Mr Mark Bone

Sir, The enormous estimates being quoted regarding the cost of reprogramming computer date systems before December 31, 1999, (report, Business News, December 30), the so-called "millennium time bomb", have alerted me to a problem facing this business.

Our rubber date stamps expire on December 31, 1998.

Yours faithfully,
MARK BONE,
The Swan Bookshop,
12 Church Road,
Teddington, Middlesex,
January 3.

Warm work

From Mr D. E. Thomas

Sir, You report today (early editions) that Harriet Harman is proposing to fund an army of young workers to insulate the homes of pensioners.

Call me a traditionalist, but I think rolls of glass fibre or boards of polystyrene would be more acceptable to pensioners.

Yours faithfully,
DEREK THOMAS,
4 Croft Close, Rowton, Chester,
January 3.



COURT CIRCULAR

SANDRINGHAM, NORFOLK

January 6: Today being the Feast of the Epiphany, a Sung Eucharist was held in the Chapel Royal, St James's Palace, when the customary offerings of Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh were made on behalf of The Queen by Major Nigel Chamberlayne-Macdonald and Air Vice-Marshal Barry Newton (Gentlemen Ushers to Her Majesty).

The Bishop of London (Dean of Her Majesty's Chapel Royal) was the Celebrant and presented the Offerings, assisted by the Reverend William Booth (Sub-Dean of Her Majesty's Chapel Royal) and the Reverend Stephen Young (Priest in Ordinary).

Today's royal engagement

The Princess Royal will attend The Thoroughbred Breeders' Association annual awards dinner at the Churchill Inter-Continental, 30 Portman Square, London, W1, at 7.45.

Vice Admiral Sir Hugh Mackenzie

A Thanksgiving Service for the life of Vice Admiral Sir Hugh Mackenzie will be held on Saturday, February 8, 1997, at 11.30am in Guildford Cathedral. Anyone who knew him is welcome.



Tony Elliott, founder, Time Out Group, is 50

The Latymer Foundation at Hammersmith

Following the announcement of the retirement of Mrs Joan Chandler, BA, the Governors of The Latymer Foundation at Hammersmith are pleased to announce the appointment of Mr David Plummer, BA (Hons), Dip HE, to be Principal of The Latymer Preparatory School from September 1997.

Dinner

The Altheim Mr Geoffrey Perry was the speaker at a talk dinner held last night at the Altheim, Mr Jonathan Ball was in the chair.

Appointments

Mrs Honor Chapman has been appointed a Crown Estate Commissioner in succession to Mr Richard Chas who term of office expired on December 31. Lord De Ramsey has been reappointed a Commissioner.

Mrs Susan Raskin has been appointed a District Judge on the Western Circuit.

Birthdays today

Mr Richard Armstrong, conductor, 54; Dr Tim Black, chief executive, Global Family Planning Charity, 60; Her Honour Hazel Cunniff, 60; Mr Hunter Davies, author and broadcaster, 60; Sir Peter Graham, QC, 63; Mr Stuart Hampton, chairman, John Lewis Partnership, 50; the Right Rev William Herbert, Bishop of St Albans, 53; Mr Ian La Frenais, screenwriter and producer, 60; Mr Ross Norman, squash champion, 58.

The Viscount of Oxford, 63; Sir John Page, former chairman, National Ports Council, 82; Lady (Kenneth) Scott, former chairwoman, Volunteer Centre UK, 65; Professor K.W. Sykes, chemist, 70; Air Commodore the Hon Sir Peter Vaneck, former Lord Mayor of London, 75; Mr Will Wyatt, chief executive, BBC Network Television, 55; Mr Roger D. Young, Director-General, Institute of Management, 57.

Retirement

Judge Allardice retired yesterday from the Midland and Oxford Circuit bench.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr R.P. Halstead and Miss L.J. Howard
The engagement is announced between Richard, elder son of Sir Ronald Halstead and the late Mrs Yvonne Halstead, of Kensington, London, and stepson of Mrs Sue Stosell, of Chislehurst, London, and Lullie, daughter of Mr and Mrs Brian Howard, of Richmond, Surrey.

Mr A.R. Beresford Campbell and Miss Z.A. MacLeod
The engagement is announced between Alexander Robert, only son of Mr and Mrs Colin R. Beresford Campbell, of 10, Haverhill, Hertfordshire, and Zoe Alexandra, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Rory MacLeod, of South Chertsey, Surrey.

Mr J.F.R. Birkin and Miss P.A.G. Moon
The engagement is announced between James, son of the late Air Commodore J.M. Birkin and Mrs C.J. Cole, of Hawkhurst, Devon, and Philippa, daughter of Major and Mrs John Moon, of Corbridge, Northumberland.

Mr T.R. Burgess and Miss E.C. Molland
The engagement is announced between Tim, eldest son of Mr Ian Burgess, of Alton, Hampshire, and Mrs T. Watson, of Boxgrove, West Sussex, and Kirstie, eldest daughter of the late Mr Nicholas Burgess and Mrs Kate Byrne, of West Wittering, West Sussex.

Mr R.M. Fennell Cox and Miss D. Krohn
The engagement is announced between Rupert, son of Mr and Mrs Michael Fennell Cox, of Church Crookham, Hampshire, and Daniela, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs Hans Krohn, of Shaw, Newbury, Berkshire.

Mr R.W. Gordon and Miss C.B.A. Gibbs
The engagement is announced between Robert William, younger son of Mr and Mrs W.G. Gordon, of Lude, Blair Atholl, and Camilla, daughter of Mr and Mrs Jeremy Gibbs, of Upper Kennards, Leigh, Kent.

Mr M.D. Kinnane and Miss T.N. Watson
The engagement is announced between Michael, son of Mr and Mrs M.D. Kinnane, of Woking, Surrey, and Tracy (Tessa), elder daughter of Mr Stuart Watson, of Wellingham, Lincolnshire, and Mrs Graham Kelly, of Brussels, Belgium.

Mr F.J. Kucera and Miss S.J. Mellor
The engagement is announced between Francis, only son of the late Dr Miroslav Kucera and of Mrs Jitka Kucera, of Reigate, Surrey, and Sarah, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Anthony Mellor, of Stockport, West Yorkshire.

Mr R. Prialuk and Miss J.C. Hebblethwaite
The engagement is announced between Roger, son of Mr and Mrs Le-Roy Prialuk, of Rimpington, Somerset, and Sarah, daughter of Dr and Mrs Rodney Hebblethwaite, of Broadmayne, Dorset.

Mr N.A.L. Chubb and Miss E.L.R. Coleman
The engagement is announced between Nathan, son of Mr and Mrs Anthony Chubb, of Ripley, Dorset, and Elena, younger daughter of Bishop Peter Coleman and Princess Donata, Mrs Peter Coleman, of West Bagborough, Somerset.

Mr M.H. Colquhoun and Miss K.R. Woodrow
The engagement is announced between Mark Humphrey, elder son of Mr and Mrs John Colquhoun, of Gloucestershire, and Katherine Rosemary, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs James Woodrow, of Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

Mr N.M. McLaure and Miss K.E.M. Townsend
The engagement is announced between Neil, son of Mr and Mrs Maurice McLaure, of Wigan, Lancashire, and Kim, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs John Townsend, of Maidenhead, Berkshire.

Mr J.J. Pearce and Miss E.C. Molland
The engagement is announced between Ivan, son of Mr James Pearce, of Redlynch, Wiltshire, and Mrs Josephine Pettman, of Pennington, Hampshire, and Emma, younger daughter of Dr and Mrs Anthony Molland, of Bossett, Southampton.

Mr D.J. Pearson and Miss E.L. Billings
The engagement is announced between David, son of Mr Raymond Pearson, of Templeogue, Dublin, and the late Mrs Margaret Pearson, of Templeogue, Dublin, and the late Mrs Margaret Pearson, of Templeogue, Dublin.

Mr L.R. Pincott and Mrs E.M. Sunderland
The engagement is announced between Mr Leslie R. Pincott, CBE, of Wimbledon, and Mrs Elaine M. Sunderland, of Hurlingham Park, London. The marriage will take place in London on March 1, 1997.

Mr M.J.G. Reid and Miss L.J. Matthews
The engagement is announced between Michael, son of Mr and Mrs M.J.G. Reid, of Woking, Surrey, and Louise, daughter of Mrs Sue Matthews and the late Mr Evelyn Matthews, of Auldghirth, Dumfriesshire.

Mr L.L. Schmeigelow and Miss S.H. Clegg
The engagement is announced between Mr Leslie L. Schmeigelow, of Belgrave, London, and Samantha, elder daughter of Mr Jonathan Clegg, of West Hampstead, London, and Mrs George Chester, of Malvern, Worcestershire.

Mr N. Wiczorek and Miss J.C. Roberts
The engagement is announced between Nicholas, only son of Mrs Monica Wiczorek, of Edinburgh, and Josephine Clare, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Christopher Roberts, of Horndesdon, Hampshire.

Mr N.W. Reynolds and Miss O.J.C. Nall
The engagement is announced between Neil William, younger son of Mr Ian Reynolds, of Corwen, Denbighshire, and Mrs Timothy Crook, of Dunhead, Dorset, and Olivia Jane Caroline, daughter of Mr and Mrs George Nall, of Wellow, Nottinghamshire.

Mr C.E.K. Sater and Miss L.J.P. Binnie
The engagement is announced between Charles, son of Mr and Mrs Peter Sater, of Dunblair, Perthshire, and Kate, daughter of Mr and Mrs Michael Binnie, of Ockham, Surrey.

Mr C.J. Wardle and Miss H.A. Kettle-Downes
The engagement is announced between Charles, son of Mr and Mrs Peter Wardle, of Dunblair, Perthshire, and Holly, daughter of Mr and Mrs Alan Kettle-Downes, of St Albans.

Mr S.B. Young and Miss L.J. Bingley
The engagement is announced between Brian Young, of Kingston, Jamaica, and Lisa, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Christopher Bingley, of Hatfield Broad Oak, Hertfordshire.

Mr K.G.W. Collins and Miss K.M. Hollis
The engagement is announced between Kenneth Guy Wyndham Collins, elder son of Mr and Mrs Graham Collins, of Storrington, West Sussex, and Miss Katharine Mary Hollis, daughter of the late Mr John Hollis, and Mrs Pauline Hollis, of Barnes, London.

Canon Dr John Polkinghorne
Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral, and recently retired as President of Queen's College, Cambridge, to be a Six Preacher of Canterbury Cathedral.

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Bedford High School
The Spring Term begins today. The 11+ supplementary entrance examination is on January 21. Auditions for Music Scholarships will take place on January 23 and the 13+ entrance examination on January 30 and 31. An Open Evening will be held on Tuesday, February 11, 4.30pm - 6.30pm. A Chamber Concert is arranged for February 13 and the Upper School Spring Concert for March 19. The John Lyon Sports Centre and the new Memorial Library will be formally opened on Tuesday, February 18, at 2.15pm by The Duke of Edinburgh.

Benenden School
Term starts today at Benenden School. Open mornings for parents of prospective students will be held on February 8 and 22. The Arts Festival sponsored by the Founders' Memorial Fund will take place on January 31. The Founders' Lecture: *Medical Ethics in a Modern World*, will be given by Dr David Cook on March 2. The School play, *Shakespeare's The Tempest*, will be performed on March 7 and 8. Senior Day will take place on May 17. Speaker of the Year will be Jane Miskin. All Seniors are warmly invited, especially leavers from 1967, 1972, 1977, 1982, 1987 and 1992.

Church of the College
Last Term at Church of the College begins today. The College entrance examination will take place on Saturday, February 1. Half term is from February 8 to February 17. The Captain of Boys Hockey is Daniel Clark and the Captain of Girls Hockey is Joanna Langford. The O.C.C. dinner at the East India Club will be held on Friday, May 9 and bookings can be made through the College office. The O.C.C. AGM will be held at Church of the College on Monday, February 17, at 7.30pm. Term ends on March 2.

Holmwood House, Colchester
Spring Term begins today at Holmwood House, Colchester. *Out of the Blue* will be performed on January 23-25. The Spring Concert is on Friday, March 14, hour visit for prospective pupils for September 1997.

Hotels and Houses, Colchester
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The John Lyon School, Harrow
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Northbourne Park
The Spring Term begins on Monday, January 6, with 224 pupils on roll. Mr Robin Edmonds joins the school from Milne Court to teach Maths. The Year 7 pantomime will be performed on January 24 and Year 8 will host a dinner party for their parents on February 7. Year 8 and Cinquante Carers morning takes place on March 20, with term finishing after the school concert on Saturday, March 22.

Parsons Mead School, Ashted
The centenary year begins with the start of term today. A Service of Thanksgiving is to take place on January 22. The Centenary Ball will be on March 15 preceded by a special evening concert. The Seniors' centenary outing is to Bruges, the Juniors' to Legoland at Windsor. Open Day takes place on July 5 and Senior Prize Giving is on September 25. The drama productions in 1997 are *Since Great Grandmother's Day* on March 22, *The Wizard of Oz* on March 31/4/5, and *Much Ado About Nothing* on December 31/4/5. A book *An Act of Faith* telling the story of 100 years of Parsons Mead is available from the school. Old Girls are invited to telephone the school on 01372 276401 for further details of the centenary events.

Pocklington School, York
The Lent Term at Pocklington School, York, begins today. Old Pocklingtonians will take place in Oxford on Saturday, March 1, and in London on Saturday, March 1 - times and venues to be confirmed. The new Head of the Junior School, from January 1997, will be Mr Alan Dennis.

The Princess Helena College
The Spring Term begins today with a record number of pupils on roll. The School, Lord Lewis of Newham takes over as Chairman of Governors. The Governors have introduced three Sports Scholarships, and these will be awarded, along with Academic Music and Art Scholarships, in the week beginning February 24. The Muriel de Vigny Music Competition is on February 7 and the School Concert on March 14. There is an Open Morning on March 1. Term ends on March 21 and is immediately followed by the 24 hour visit for prospective pupils for September 1997.

The Princess Helena College
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Anniversaries

1899: Jos. Poulenc, composer, Paris.

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TRADE: 0171 481 982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

We can approach God with this confidence: if we make requests in accord with his will, he listens to us and if we know that our requests are heard, we know that all we ask of him is ours. 1 John 8: 14:15

BIRTHS

ALLEN - On Boxing Day 1996, to Susan Jane (nee Seaford) and Mark, a beautiful daughter, Miss Allen.

ATKINS - On Saturday 4th January 1997, to Emma (nee Leck) and Simon, a son, Oliver Charles John, a brother for Rosie and Sophie.

BATY - On January 2nd, 1997, to Alexandra (nee Leck) and Patrick, a son, James William Edmund, a brother for Charlotte and Frederick.

BURD - On January 2nd 1997, to Anna (nee Purdy) and Rob, a son, George Charles Arthur.

CANTWELL - On 2nd January at The Portland Hospital, to Laura and James, a beautiful daughter - Abigail Mary 3530 gm and 33 cm.

CARTWRIGHT - On 2nd January at The Portland Hospital, to Robin and Sean, a beautiful and healthy son, William George.

CHARTERS - To Kathryn and Louis, on New Year's Day 1997, in Milton, a daughter, Ruby Rose, a sister for Emily and Emma.

DODD - On 23rd December 1996, to Annabelle (nee Foston) and Jonathan, a son, Mungo William.

HUNTERMAN - On Christmas Day, to Charlotte (nee Fricker) and Oliver, a daughter.

JURGENS - On 2nd January 1997, at St Thomas' Hospital, London, to Katherine (nee Nettle) and Angus, a son, Rudi Miles MacGregor.

Pressley proves himself the king of defenders



INVESTMENT in a Dundee United defender has proved profitable for players in *The Times* Interactive Team Football competition. Steven Pressley's two goals against Aberdeen on New Year's Day helped to give him a points tally of 14 this week, the highest by one player in the game.

Both the weekly and the monthly winners included Pressley. The weekly winner, Mr P. Dolan, of Evesham, scored 71 points, with his team, Evesham Earners, over the week to win his £250 prize. The monthly winner was Mr D. Edmondson, of Worthing, whose team Edmo Uid scored 136 points and thus leaves Mr Edmondson £1,000 better off.

Mr Dolan's team is:

Goalkeeper
M. Bosnich (Aston Villa)

Full backs
M Malpas (Dundee Utd)
S Pearce (Nottm Forest)

Central defenders
F Leboeuf (Chelsea)
S Pressley (Dundee Utd)

Midfield players
S Agnew (Sunderland)
R di Matteo (Chelsea)
M Isaias (Coventry)
D Lennon (Raith)

Strikers
D Saunders (Nottm Forest)
A Shearer (Newcastle)

Manager
B Little (Aston Villa)



Humphreys scores his second goal against Grimsby. The Sheffield Wednesday forward gained five points this week



change up to two players each week and to adjust your team if one of your players is actually transferred out of the FA Carling Premiership or Bell's Scottish League premier division.

You can make transfers only by telephone. Using a Touch-tone (DTMF) telephone (most push-button telephones with a * and a hash key are Touch-tone), call the 0991 866 968 line during the times given. From outside the United Kingdom, you must call 0044 990 200 668.

When making a transfer, you must ensure that the team does not contain more than two individuals (two players or one player and a manager) from the same club.

If you are lagging behind the leading team selectors, the transfer system will be an appealing option to you in the chase for the prizes — the overall £50,000, monthly £1,000 or weekly £250.

HOW THE SCORING SYSTEM WORKS IN ITF

All 1996-7 matches in the FA Carling Premiership, FA Cup, Bell's Scottish League premier division and Tennents Scottish Cup from August 17 count for points. Penalty shootouts do not count but results decided in this way will count for managers.

POINTS SCORED		
Goalkeeper	Striker	
Keeps clean sheet*	Scores goal	2pts
Scores goal	All players	
Saves penalty	Appearance*	1pt
Full back/Central defender	Scores hat-trick	6pts
Keeps clean sheet*	Manager	
Scores goal	Team wins	3pts
Midfield player	Team draws	1pt
Keeps clean sheet*		
Scores goal		

POINTS DEDUCTED		
Goalkeeper		Booked
Concedes goal	2pts	Concedes penalty
Full back/Center defender		Misses penalty
Concedes goal	1pt	Scores own goal
All players		Manager
Set off	3pts	Team losses

* must have played for 75 minutes in the match
 † must have played for 45 minutes in the match



HOW TO MAKE A TRANSFER IN ITF

Call 0897 856 968

If telephoning from outside the United Kingdom call 44 (0) 200 888

You may make transfers only by telephone using a Touch-Tone (DTMF) telephone (most push-button telephones with a * and a hash key) and Touch-Tone. You will need your ten-digit selector PIN, which you will have to tap in, not speak. Follow the simple instructions and tap in the five-digit codes of the players you are transferring.

You may only make transfers in one team per telephone call. If you have entered two teams and want to make transfers in both, you must make two separate calls.

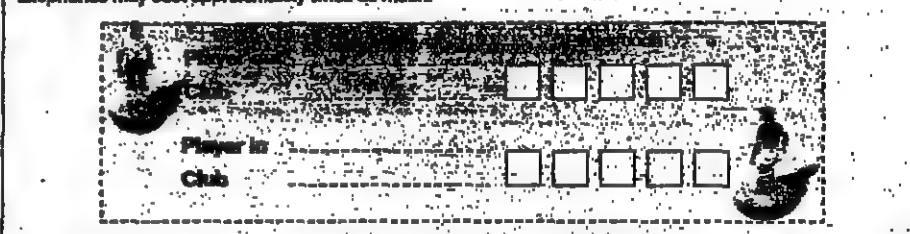
You may transfer two (but no more than two) individuals: two players or one player and a manager, during a transfer week. A player being transferred out must be replaced by one from the same category and you must keep to the team format of a goalkeeper, two full backs, two central defenders, four midfield players, two strikers and a manager. You must not exceed the £25 million budget and have no more than two individuals from the same club. Incorrect transfers will be rejected and your team will remain in its previous form.

The transfer week runs from 00.01 on Tuesday to midnight the following Monday. Transfers made before noon each day will become effective immediately. Transfers made after noon will become effective for matches played after noon on the following day.

Your new player only starts to score points for you when his transfer is registered. The current score of the player transferred out remains part of your team score but he then ceases to score for you.

If a player or manager moves teams during the season, it may affect the composition of your team. You must adjust your team by using the transfer system to avoid missing out on points.

Cells will be charged at 45¢ per minute cheap rate, 50¢ per minute at other times. Calls made from public telephones may cost approximately twice as much.



THE LEADING 250 ENTRIES IN THE TIMES INTERACTIVE TEAM

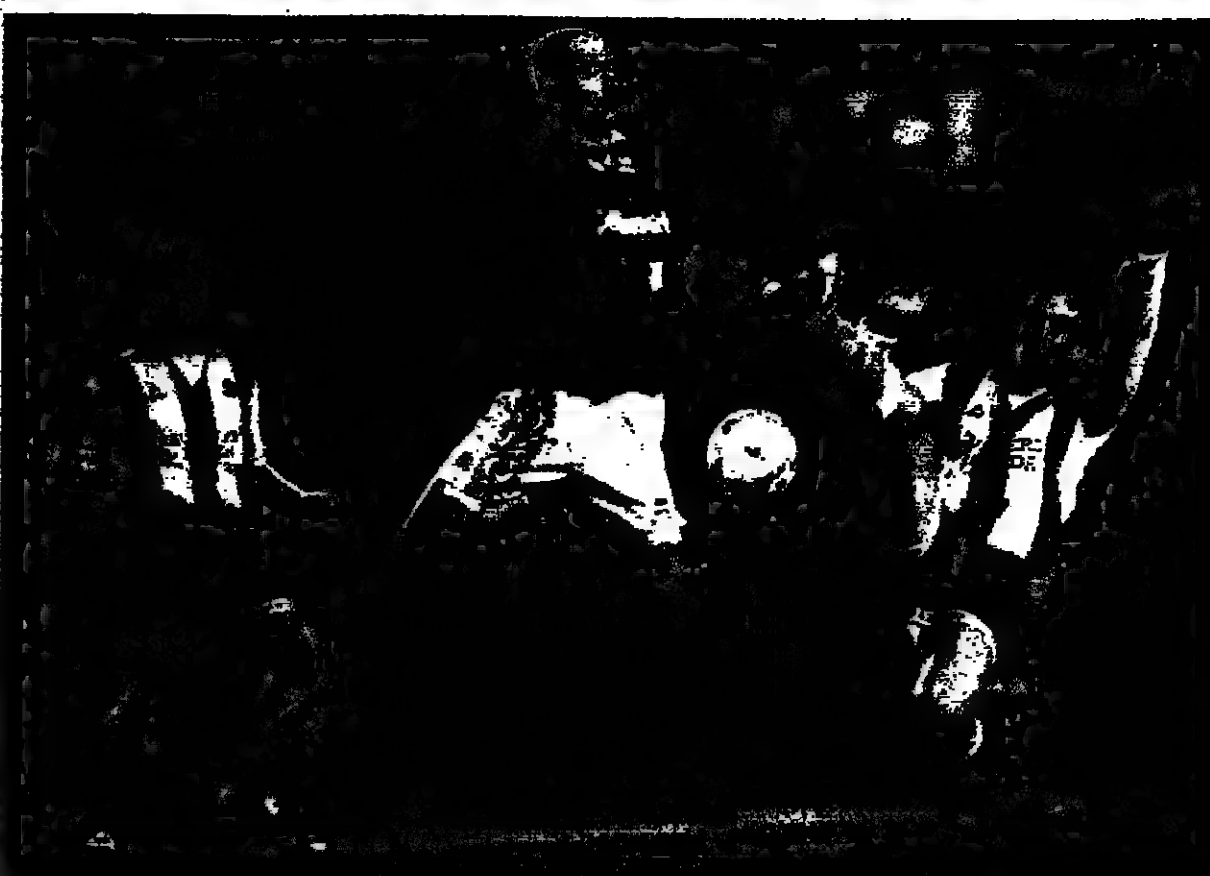
Team	(Player's name)	Pts	Team	(Player's name)	Pts	Team	(Player's name)	Pts	Team	(Player's name)	Pts
1 John Hunt Tautman D	(J Hunt)	428	108 AFC	(M Baber)	353	180 Inter The Hat	(M Viner)	353	180 Inter The Hat	(M Viner)	353
2 Sophie And Sam	(G Foster)	428	109 Hunter's Mob	(C Hunter)	353	180 Murray's Magicians	(M MacMillan)	353	180 Murray's Magicians	(M MacMillan)	353
3 John Hunt Tautman H	(J Hunt)	421	110 Orville Classion	(J Bradshaw)	352	180 Ideal 150485	(G Daw)	352	180 Ideal 150485	(G Daw)	352
4 Jones Boys Eight	(M Jones)	414	114 Subwith Utd 3	(M Larcombe)	352	180 Akle Is Great	(J Holliday)	352	180 Akle Is Great	(J Holliday)	352
5 John Hunt Tautman F	(J Hunt)	408	114 Always Portugal 1	(V Guimaraes)	352	180 Paulo's Last Foot	(A Ozanna)	352	180 Paulo's Last Foot	(A Ozanna)	352
6 Jabberwocky	(P A Amos)	407	114 I Hate Alan Hinson	(V Cox)	352	180 S Gil Tautman 5	(S Gil)	352	180 S Gil Tautman 5	(S Gil)	352
7 Weasley 3	(J Brown)	407	114 Turner's Emers 8	(P Turner)	352	180 Turner's Emers 1	(P Turner)	352	180 Turner's Emers 1	(P Turner)	352
8 Nobby 3	(J Brown)	406	114 Lesley's Legends	(L Michaels)	352	180 Midfield Magic	(M Corless)	352	180 Midfield Magic	(M Corless)	352
9 Purple Rain	(S Gohl)	403	114 Bow Utd	(K J Burns)	352	180 KILFC	(J Pregon)	352	180 KILFC	(J Pregon)	352
10 Raj Is Back To Kill 8	(R Gohl)	403	114 Nobby 12	(J Brown)	352	180 The Dansters	(C C Vewers)	351	180 The Dansters	(C C Vewers)	351
11 Digger	(V Cox)	403	122 RKV 3	(C Veneaz)	351	180 Turner's Tigers	(C Turner)	351	180 Turner's Tigers	(C Turner)	351
12 Raj Is Back To Kill 8	(R Gohl)	399	122 Alderwick Villa	(M Jones)	351	180 LCO	(T Telford)	351	180 LCO	(T Telford)	351
13 Boston Celtic	(B McEwen)	399	122 Superch	(J Hunt)	351	180 Raj Is Back To Kill 1	(R Gohl)	351	180 Raj Is Back To Kill 1	(R Gohl)	351
14 Jones Boys Three	(M Jones)	397	126 Dour Rangers 3	(E Clayton)	350	180 Elantra United	(P Leader)	351	180 Elantra United	(P Leader)	351
15 Nobby	(J Brown)	397	127 Jan 2	(J B Portwood)	348	180 Lloyd's Barge	(D Goodwin)	350	180 Lloyd's Barge	(D Goodwin)	350
16 Edmo Utd	(D Edmondson)	396	129 No Mifield	(E Walsh)	347	180 Turner's Emers 4	(P Turner)	350	180 Turner's Emers 4	(P Turner)	350
17 Gangsters	(A Lone)	396	129 Tottin' Fire	(J Mulcock)	346	180 W Gooey	(J W Gooey)	350	180 W Gooey	(J W Gooey)	350
18 Raj Is Back To Kill 7	(R Gohl)	393	130 FC Parls	(N Skipper)	346	180 SJJ	(J Doughy)	350	180 SJJ	(J Doughy)	350
19 John Hunt Tautman E	(J Hunt)	392	130 Central Athletic	(A Luckhurst)	346	180 Bournemouth FC	(D Lee)	350	180 Bournemouth FC	(D Lee)	350
20 Moah's Ark	(G P Dolan)	392	130 Caroline D	(J Gohl)	346	180 HDS Is Out Of Order	(M Wheatley)	350	180 HDS Is Out Of Order	(M Wheatley)	350
21 Where's Ray Gone?	(P Fromm)	391	130 Raj Is Back To Kill 3	(P Barrow)	346	180 Swegen On Justice FC	(M H)	350	180 Swegen On Justice FC	(M H)	350
22 Nonchalant AFC 3	(R J Ward)	389	130 Inter The Unknown	(A Silfence)	346	180 J Vent U	(J Staszewicz)	350	180 J Vent U	(J Staszewicz)	350
23 Swier's Team	(B Howes)	387	135 Joking	(P Fallon)	346	180 Mean Friday Langman	(M Madden)	350	180 Mean Friday Langman	(M Madden)	350
24 Inter The Pub	(M Ward)	386	135 Fendon United	(E Cowen)	346	180 Scm Lovers	(P Farina)	350	180 Scm Lovers	(P Farina)	350
25 Brainwaves United	(C Vices)	386	136 Parwick Billeo 3	(J Hamilton)	346	180 Watford United	(T Shelley)	350	180 Watford United	(T Shelley)	350
26 Jones Boys One	(M L Jones)	385	136 Langster Lads	(N Finch)	346	180 Do I Met U Man Utd	(C D Woodward)	350	180 Do I Met U Man Utd	(C D Woodward)	350
27 Bob's Boys 2	(R Calder)	385	136 Tarr Academics	(A Kirtwood)	346	180 Graham's Heroes	(S A Luckhurst)	350	180 Graham's Heroes	(S A Luckhurst)	350
28 John Hunt Tautman B	(J Hunt)	385	136 Thing Fish	(J Doughy)	346	180 Caroline C	(S A Luckhurst)	350	180 Caroline C	(S A Luckhurst)	350
29 Nobby 11	(J Brown)	384	142 DJ5 2	(D Sention)	344	180 Hammy's Heroes	(S A Luckhurst)	350	180 Hammy's Heroes	(S A Luckhurst)	350
30 Storm	(P Mills)	382	142 Steady Scorers	(G Weiss)	344	180 Mel Bushers	(D Curzon)	350	180 Mel Bushers	(D Curzon)	350
31 Inter The Stand	(M Ward)	379	142 CUOK	(W Heslop)	344	180 Desfontion Men	(J Murray)	350	180 Desfontion Men	(J Murray)	350
32 John Hunt Tautman C	(J Hunt)	379	142 AS	(K Farhall)	344	180 Scotty's Puppies II	(E G Ryan)	350	180 Scotty's Puppies II	(E G Ryan)	350
33 Nobby 20	(J Brown)	379	142 AS	(K Farhall)	344	180 The Tarrs' Angels	(P Farina)	350	180 The Tarrs' Angels	(P Farina)	350
34 Tulp's Tops	(D Tulp)	377	142 Football Jumbies	(J Melling)	344	180 Sid In A Carry On	(R Foyler)	350	180 Sid In A Carry On	(R Foyler)	350
35 ABC	(M Baber)	377	142 Arath	(J Fyfe)	344	180 Desfontion Men	(J Murray)	350	180 Desfontion Men	(J Murray)	350
36 Subwith Utd 5	(M Larcombe)	377	142 Hull Red Devils	(G Foster)	344	180 Scotty's Puppies II	(E G Ryan)	350	180 Scotty's Puppies II	(E G Ryan)	350
38 Nobby 20	(J Brown)	376	142 Where's Amos?	(J Saunders)	344	180 The Tarrs' Angels	(P Farina)	350	180 The Tarrs' Angels	(P Farina)	350
39 Bad Time Boys	(R Crook)	376	150 Set Against Odds	(S Shipley)	343	180 Sid In A Carry On	(R Foyler)	350	180 Sid In A Carry On	(R Foyler)	350
39 NST Monkies	(J Staszewicz)	375	150 Superf Bile	(J Staszewicz)	343	180 Walker's Winners	(R Pratt)	350	180 Walker's Winners	(R Pratt)	350
42 Nobby 3	(J Brown)	375	150 Rainbow Wonders	(G Wales)	343	180 T 20	(T Bassam)	350	180 T 20	(T Bassam)	350
42 Brown's Boys XI	(J Brown)	374	150 Totted Two	(E Kishy)	343	180 Cootie's Gummies	(S Cook)	350	180 Cootie's Gummies	(S Cook)	350
42 Team C	(A Lone)	374	150 Dynasno Hibs	(S Miller)	343	180 Des Boot	(D A Sutton)	350	180 Des Boot	(D A Sutton)	350
42 Sky Rockets	(K Farhall)	374	150 Perseus Engles	(R Calder)	343	180 Rovers' Rabbits	(M Roberts)	350	180 Rovers' Rabbits	(M Roberts)	350
42 AB 4	(A Boyland)	374	150 Bob's Boys 3	(M Peck)	343	180 Grawlers' Team 1	(M Johnston)	350	180 Grawlers' Team 1	(M Johnston)	350
46 Nobby 34	(J Brown)	373	150 Del Goo 3	(C Clark)	343	180 Shyffe Sparazars	(J Longsett)	350	180 Shyffe Sparazars	(J Longsett)	350
47 JS August Monthly 1	(J Swires)	371	150 Arath	(C Tague)	343	180 Dalish	(J McKean)	350	180 Dalish	(J McKean)	350
47 Nobby 22	(J Brown)	371	160 Tropic Top Tan	(P Bailey)	342	180 New We Are Two	(J Pregon)	350	180 New We Are Two	(J Pregon)	350
49 Pin Ups Two	(P Tusler)	370	160 Shrew Motes	(J Brasher)	342	180 Peat's People 2	(P Gregorovic)	350	180 Peat's People 2	(P Gregorovic)	350
49 Sonky Boys	(R Crook)	370	160 Fowrey City	(P Fowmes)	342	180 Soccer Superstars	(J McCollen)	350	180 Soccer Superstars	(J McCollen)	350
51 Bladenunners	(P Walters)	368	160 Shack Adack	(R Shaddetam)	342	180 Famm's Slammer	(J Staszewicz)	350	180 Famm's Slammer	(J Staszewicz)	350
51 Nobby J	(J Brown)	367	160 Fordy's Frinds	(C Fordo)	342	180 Nobby 11	(J Roberts)	350	180 Nobby 11	(J Roberts)	350
53 Crooky Boys	(R Crook)	367	160 Tague's 1st XI	(P Loney)	342	180 Nobby 11	(J Roberts)	350	180 Nobby 11	(J Roberts)	350
53 JS August Monthly 2	(J Swires)	366	160 Triple Top Tan	(T Bassam)	341	180 Bob's Boys 5	(K Munro)	350	180 Bob's Boys 5	(K Munro)	350
55 Layton Lions 7	(P Layton)	366	160 Shrew Motes	(J O'Connell)	341	180 Orgon Boys	(D Pritch)	350	180 Orgon Boys	(D Pritch)	350
55 You're Not Very Well	(J Laskowski)	366	160 Fowrey City	(J Pregon)	341	180 Spurns 124	(J Doodly)	350	180 Spurns 124	(J Doodly)	350
55 Inter The Bin	(M Ward)	366	160 Shack Adack	(C A Kitcher)	341	180 Murrer's Mates	(D Anderson)	350	180 Murrer's Mates	(D Anderson)	350
55 Concorele Baranis	(S Mangle)	366	160 Fordy's Frinds	(B Bear)	340	180 1870 Jv FC	(J Ross)	350	180 1870 Jv FC	(J Ross)	350
59 1st Elatt	(K J Burns)	366	160 Beech Valley	(R Knappes)	340	180 Drago Dmains	(M Hayward)	350	180 Drago Dmains	(M Hayward)	350
59 It's About Revenge C	(R Gohl)	366	160 Tague's 1st XI	(P Loney)	340	180 Dine Bar Dmains	(R Davidson)	350	180 Dine Bar Dmains	(R Davidson)	350
60 Marn FC	(M Baber)	364	160 Tropic Top Tan	(T Bassam)	340	180 Dore's Emers	(D Lightowler)	350	180 Dore's Emers	(D Lightowler)	350
60 Curritty Seashells	(I Doughy)	364	160 Shrew Motes	(J O'Connell)	340	180 Billy We Make XI	(no name)	350	180 Billy We Make XI	(no name)	350
60 JBC Sports	(A Bates)	364	160 Fowrey City	(J Pregon)	340	180 TWFC 1	(T Wbley)	350	180 TWFC 1	(T Wbley)	350
64 Enid 2	(J Haggan)	363	160 Shack Adack	(B Bear)	340	180 Red Star Storm	(P Miles)	350	180 Red Star Storm	(P Miles)	350
64 Jones Boys Sky	(J Brown)	363	160 Beech Valley	(R Knappes)	340	180 Glen Elgin	(P Fester)	350	180 Glen Elgin	(P Fester)	350
64 Nobby 20	(J Brown)	363	160 Tague's 1st XI	(P Loney)	340	180 Nobby 11	(J Roberts)	350	180 Nobby 11	(J Roberts)	350
67 Inter The Wallet	(M Ward)	362	160 Triple Top Tan	(T Bassam)	340	180 Nobby 11	(J Roberts)	350	180 Nobby 11	(J Roberts)	350
67 Nobby 7	(J Brown)	362	160 Shrew Motes	(J O'Connell)	340	180 Nobby 11	(J Roberts)	350	180 Nobby 11	(J Roberts)	350
67 Nobby 14	(J Brown)	362	160 Fowrey City	(J Pregon)	340	180 Nobby 11	(J Roberts)	350	180 Nobby 11	(J Roberts)	350
67 Skyway	(A Burton)	362	160 Shack Adack	(B Bear)	340	180 Nobby 11	(J Roberts)	350	180 Nobby 11	(J Roberts)	350

The ITF players, their points and their values if you are considering the transfer option

10101	M. Watt	Aberdeen	1.50	0	-3
10102	N. Walker	Aberdeen	1.00	-7	-1
10201	D. Seaman	Arsenal	5.00	0	+27
10202	V. Barham	Arsenal	0.75	0	0
10203	J. Little	Arsenal	0.75	+5	-10
10301	M. Bealich	Aston Villa	3.50	+5	+5
10302	M. Collins	Aston Villa	1.00	0	+19
10401	T. Flowers	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	+10	-4
10402	S. Gilvan	Blackburn Rovers	2.00	0	+4
10501	G. Marshall	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	0	+1
10502	S. Kerr	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	0	+1
10601	D. Kharine	Blackburn Rovers	2.50	0	+10
10602	K. Hithcock	Blackburn Rovers	2.00	0	-20
10701	F. Grodas	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	+10	+8
10702	S. Ogilvie	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	-3	-13
10801	J. Filler	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	0
10802	M. Taylor	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	0
10901	A. McNeill	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	-4
10902	L. Key	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	-10
11001	J. Westwater	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	+10	-34
11002	N. Southall	Blackburn Rovers	2.50	+2	-9
11101	P. Gerrard	Blackburn Rovers	2.50	0	+1
11102	G. Rousset	Blackburn Rovers	2.00	+4	-17
11201	J. Leighton	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	-12	-16
11202	D. Lefkovic	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	-3	-19
11301	M. Bealich	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	0	0
11302	P. Evans	Blackburn Rovers	0.25	0	0
11401	N. Martin	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	-5	-2
11402	K. Poole	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	-6
11501	K. Koller	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	-13
11502	D. James	Blackburn Rovers	5.00	+4	+15
11601	A. Warner	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	0
11602	P. Schuster	Blackburn Rovers	5.00	+10	+8
11701	R. van der Grint	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	0	+5
11702	G. Walsh	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	0	+5
11801	A. Miller	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	-23
11802	S. Horro	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	0	-19
11901	S. Horro	Blackburn Rovers	4.00	+4	0
11902	S. Horro	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	0	0
12001	M. Connolly	Blackburn Rovers	2.50	+10	-31
12002	A. Fells	Blackburn Rovers	0.75	0	0
12101	T. Wright	Blackburn Rovers	0.75	0	0
12102	S. Thomson	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	-3	-25
12201	A. Goren	Blackburn Rovers	5.00	-1	-17
12202	K. Goren	Blackburn Rovers	2.00	-1	-14
12301	S. Goren	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	0
12302	D. Bunt	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	0
12401	N. Moss	Blackburn Rovers	0.25	0	-2
12402	C. Woods	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	0	-19
12501	Sunderland	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	-4	-21
12502	A. Cotton	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	+9
12601	J. Walker	Blackburn Rovers	3.50	-3	-2
12602	E. Bardeen	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	0
12701	L. Milosko	Blackburn Rovers	2.00	-2	-18
12702	S. Mouton	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	+5
12801	N. Sullivan	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	0
12802	P. Heald	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	0

20101	B. McGinnis	Aberdeen	2.00	-3	+8
20102	L. Dixon	Aberdeen	3.00	0	+20
20201	N. Winterburn	Aberdeen	3.00	+4	+28
20202	S. Morrow	Aberdeen	1.00	0	+1
20301	S. Sturges	Aston Villa	3.00	+4	+28
20302	A. Wright	Aston Villa	3.00	+4	+28
20401	M. Collins	Aston Villa	0.25	0	0
20402	P. King	Aston Villa	3.00	+3	+28
20501	F. Nelson	Aston Villa	3.00	+3	+28
20502	H. Berg	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	+3	+28
20601	G. le Sax	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	+3	+28
20602	J. Kenna	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	+3	+28
20701	G. Croft	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	0	+2
20702	S. Goren	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	+3	+28
20801	D. Paterson	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	+3	+28
20802	S. Clarke	Blackburn Rovers	2.00	+7	+7
20901	T. Phelan	Blackburn Rovers	2.00	-1	-2
20902	S. Minto	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	+2	+8
21001	D. Burrows	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	0	-7
21002	S. Clarke	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	-7
21101	M. Hall	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	-7
21102	R. Genster	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	0	-2
21201	C. Powell	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	0	-3
21202	D. Yates	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	-4
21301	P. Parker	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	-4
21302	M. Malpas	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	-4
21401	S. Perry	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	+1	+7
21402	N. Duffy	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	-7
21501	C. Miller	Blackburn Rovers	0.25	+8	-7
21502	A. Tod	Blackburn Rovers	0.25	+8	-7
21601	M. Hogg	Blackburn Rovers	2.50	-1	-4
21602	A. Hinchcliffe	Blackburn Rovers	2.00	-1	-4
21701	E. Barrett	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	-4
21702	S. Locke	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	-4
21801	N. Poulton	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	-5
21802	W. Miller	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	-3	-1
21901	A. Dow	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	-3	-1
21902	G. MacPherson	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	-10
22001	K. Kelly	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	-2	-14
22002	A. Doran	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	-2	-14
22101	S. Doran	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	-3	-12
22102	G. Hall	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	-4
22201	M. Whitlow	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	-6
22202	S. Grayson	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	-6
22301	N. Lewis	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	-6
22302	F. Rollins	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	-6
22401	R. Jones	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	-6
22402	S. Jones	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	0	-6
22501	S. Blomley	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	+4	+28
22502	D. Irwin	Blackburn Rovers	4.00	+5	+28
22601	G. Neville	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	+7	+28
22602	P. Neville	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	0	+2
22701	N. Cox	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	0	+2
22702	C. Morris	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	0	-1
22801	C. Fleming	Blackburn Rovers	0.75	+1	-4
22802	C. Blackmore	Blackburn Rovers	0.25	+3	-2
22901	S. McMillan	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	-3
22902	W. Barton	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	0	-1
23001	S. Wilson	Blackburn Rovers	2.50	0	+2
23002	J. Bennett	Blackburn Rovers	2.50	+3	+10
23101	S. Pearce	Blackburn Rovers	4.00	+3	+8
23102	L. Lytle	Blackburn Rovers	2.00	+8	0
23201	A. I. Hazled	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	+8	+11
23202	N. Jerkin	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	+8	+11
23301	P. Jones	Blackburn Rovers	0.75	0	-3
23302	D. Kirkwood	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	-1	-8
23401	D. Robertson	Blackburn Rovers	2.50	0	+15
23402	J. Brown	Blackburn Rovers	2.00	0	0
23501	I. Nolan	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	0	+18
23502	P. Atherton	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	0	+18
23601	S. Milne	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	+3
23602	D. Stannard	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	+10
23701	L. Briscoe	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	-5
23702	J. Dodd	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	0	-5
23801	F. Bennell	Blackburn Rovers	0.75	-5	-14
23802	S. Charlton	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	-5	-11
23901	K. Kubicki	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	-4
23902	M. Hall	Blackburn Rovers	0.25	-1	-1
24001	A. Austin	Blackburn Rovers	2.00	-2	-2
24002	C. Wilson	Blackburn Rovers	2.00	0	+17
24101	J. Edinburg	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	-1	-11
24102	D. Kershake	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	0
24201	S. Carr	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	-1	-14
24202	J. Dicks	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	-1	-14
24301	T. Bresnahan	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	0
24302	K. Rowland	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	0	+4
24401	M. Brown	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	0
24402	K. Brown	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	0	+9
24501	B. Thatchner	Blackburn Rovers	0.75	0	+3
24502	A. Kimble	Blackburn Rovers	0.75	0	+3
24601	K. Cunningham	Blackburn Rovers	0.75	0	+3
24602	D. Jupp	Blackburn Rovers	0.75	0	+3
24701	C. Peary	Blackburn Rovers	0.25	0	+18

30101	B. Irvine	Aberdeen	2.00	-4	-4
30102	C. Woodthorpe	Aberdeen	1.50	0	-3
30201	A. Adams	Aberdeen	4.00	+4	+23
30202	S. Bould	Aberdeen	3.00	+4	+24
30301	M. Keown	Aberdeen	3.00	+4	+28
30302	A. Lingham	Aberdeen	1.00	0	+8
30401	S. Marshall	Aberdeen	1.00	0	0



Ravanelli tangles with the Chester defence. His two goals on Saturday have boosted his ITF tally to 45 points

30301	G. Southgate	Aston Villa	3.50	0	+16
30302	U. Ehlgrus	Aston Villa	3.00	+4	+38
30303	C. Tiller	Aston Villa	1.00	+3	+12
30304	R. Scimone	Aston Villa	1.00	0	+14
30401	C. Hendry	Blackburn Rovers	4.00	+8	+17
30402	I. Pearce	Blackburn Rovers	2.50	0	0
30403	C. Coleman	Blackburn Rovers	2.50	0	-3
30404	N. Markar	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	+2
30501	T. Boyd	Celtic	3.00	+2	+14
30502	M. MacKury	Celtic	1.50	+3	+5
30503	A. Stubbs	Celtic	3.50	-1	+11
30504	B. O'Neill	Celtic	3.00	-2	+2
30601	M. Doherty	Chelsea	2.50	+8	+21
30602	F. Lebowitz	Chelsea	2.50	+8	+21
30603	F. Sinclear	Chelsea	2.00	0	0
30604	D. Lee	Chelsea	2.00	0	+3
30605	A. Myers	Chelsea	1.50	0	+6
30606	E. Johnson	Chelsea	1.50	0	+10
30701	L. Doherty	Coventry City	2.00	+1	+8
30702	J. Shaw	Coventry City	1.50	-1	+5
30703	I. Sinclear	Coventry City	2.50	0	0
30704	D. Wastall	Coventry City	1.00	0	0
30705	P. McGrath	Coventry City	2.50	0	0
30801	J. Laurson	Coventry City	1.00	0	+8
30802	M. Carbone	Coventry City	0.50	0	-1
30803	S. Pressley	Dundee United	1.00	+14	+36
30804	J. McNeill	Dundee United	0.75	-1	-18
30901	I. Den Blom	Dundee United	0.75	-1	-18
30902	D. Unsworth	Dundee United	2.50	0	+11
30903	D. Watson	Dundee United	2.50	+3	+13
30904	C. Short	Dundee United	2.00	0	+9
31001	D. McPherson	Dundee United	1.00	+3	+11
31002	P. Ritchie	Dundee United	1.00	+4	+16
31003	J. McLaughlin	Dundee United	0.50	0	-4
31004	S. Walsh	Dundee United	0.75	-1	-12
31101	H. Hunter	Hibernian	0.50	-5	-8
31102	M. Reilly	Hibernian	1.00	-2	-1
31103	R. Montgomery	Hibernian	0.75	0	-1
31104	L. Kitchin	Hibernian	2.50	-2	-14
31105	J. Johnson	Hibernian	1.50	0	+2
31106	R. Johnson	Hibernian	1.50	0	+2
31107	J. Johnson	Hibernian	1.50	0	+2
31108	J. Johnson	Hibernian	1.50	0	+2
31109	J. Johnson	Hibernian	1.50	0	+2
31110	J. Johnson	Hibernian	1.50	0	+2
31111	J. Johnson	Hibernian	1.50	0	+2
31112	J. Johnson	Hibernian	1.50	0	+2
31113	J. Johnson	Hibernian	1.50	0	+2
31114	J. Johnson	Hibernian	1.50	0	+2
31115	J. Johnson	Hibernian	1.50	0	+2
31116	J. Johnson	Hibernian	1.50	0	+2
31117	J. Johnson	Hibernian	1.50	0	+2
31118	J. Johnson	Hibernian	1.50	0	+2
31119	J. Johnson	Hibernian	1.50	0	+2
31120	J. Johnson	Hibernian	1.50	0	+2

	Player	Club	Pos.	Wk. Dec.
0101	D Windass	Aberdeen	3.00	+1+26
0102	S Glass	Aberdeen	3.00	+1+12
0103	P Bernard	Aberdeen	2.50	+1+8
0104	I Kirkov	Aberdeen	2.50	+2+26
0105	T Tsvetkov	Aberdeen	0.50	+1+21
0201	D Platt	Arsenal	4.50	+1+21
0202	P Merson	Arsenal	4.00	+3+40
0203	R Parlor	Arsenal	2.00	+2+13
0204	G Halder	Arsenal	1.50	0+0
0205	I Selley	Arsenal	0.50	0+0
0206	P Vieira	Arsenal	3.00	+3+17
0207	R Gards	Arsenal	2.00	0+4
0301	M Draper	Aston Villa	4.00	+2+21
0302	A Townsend	Aston Villa	2.50	+2+31
0303	I Taylor	Aston Villa	2.50	+1+23
0304	G Farrelly	Aston Villa	1.00	0+0
0305	S Cusack	Aston Villa	3.50	+0+13
0401	J Wilcox	Blackburn Rovers	4.00	+4+24
0402	L Boehnen	Blackburn Rovers	3.50	+2+21
0403	G Filcott	Blackburn Rovers	2.50	+0+10
0404	W McCall	Blackburn Rovers	2.50	+0+10
0405	T Sherwood	Blackburn Rovers	2.50	+5+26
0406	P Warhurst	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	0+0+3
0407	G Donia	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	+0+14
0408	S Ripley	Blackburn Rovers	1.00	+0+5
0409	M Holmes	Blackburn Rovers	0.75	0+0

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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

TUESDAY JANUARY 7 1997



Cementing a deal: Ross Dunn, right, personnel director of Blue Circle Cement, and Roger Davies, a driver at the company's Coudon works, near Alton Towers, Staffordshire, celebrate a ground-breaking job security deal announced yesterday, under which Blue Circle pledges there will be no compulsory redundancies for five years. Report, page 24

Warburg loses £1m as Azlan issue collapses

By FRASER NELSON

SBC WARBURG, the merchant bank, was left nursing losses of £1 million yesterday after the collapse of its £45.5 million rights issue for Azlan, the computer networking company.

The bank was obliged to buy 2.22 million shares at 640p each, 1.42 million of which it then sold off in a pool at 550p each, incurring a loss of £1.3 million. It cleared all of its shares by the close of trading.

Azlan wanted to buy Akam, a Dutch computing company, for £29.6 million. It was offering its new shares on a three-for-ten basis at 620p each, while its own shares were trading at 740p apiece. However, its shares kept falling weeks after they adjusted for the issue, dropping to 500p.

Analysts said the plunge came after the rights issue drew attention to Azlan's flagging growth rate. There is said to be concern that its margins may now be starting to slip as its product — networked computer services — begins to become more established and other companies join in. There was also concern about why the sum Azlan was planning to raise was £19 million over the costs of the acquisition.

The flop has drawn further attention to the City's rights issue structure, in which it is standard to charge a flat rate of 2 per cent commission regardless of the company.

Warburg had agreed to a lower commission of 1 1/4 per cent of the issue, growing by 1/4 per cent for every week after the 30 days' period. It has given Azlan a £25 million bridging loan for which it is charging £50,000. Azlan has agreed to pay a total fee of £593,000.

Azlan's shares rose 2 1/2p to 570p yesterday.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES		
FTSE 100	4106.5	(-17.0)
Yield	3.75%	
FTSE All-Share	2012.51	(-6.26)
Nikkei	18446.00	(-84.65)
Dow Jones	8516.05	(+71.96)
S&P Composite	733.15	(+5.12)

LIB RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5%)
Long Bond	6 3/4%	(6%)
Yield	6.74%	(6.74%)

LONDON MONEY		
3-month interbank	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
6-month interbank	5 1/2%	(5 1/2%)
12-month interbank	5 3/4%	(5 3/4%)
3-month bill	100%	(100%)

STERLING		
New York	1.6855	(1.6877)
London	1.6847	(1.6818)
DM	2.6364	(2.6348)
FF	8.9104	(8.9014)
SP	1.3536	(1.3552)
Yen	115.79	(116.33)
S index	99.0	(99.1)

DOLLAR		
London	1.6874	(1.6860)
DM	5.2523	(5.2515)
FF	1.3536	(1.3552)
Yen	115.79	(116.33)
S index	99.0	(99.1)

NORTH SEA OIL		
Brent 15-day (Mar)	£24.10	(\$23.55)

GOLD		
London close	£358.55	(\$362.15)

* Figures midday trading price

Wickes shares return today

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

TRADING in Wickes shares will restart today, six months after the discovery of serious accounting irregularities. The move is widely expected to smoke out a bidder for the DIY chain.

The company's heavily discounted £53.2 million rights issue and its capital reorganisation were backed by shareholders yesterday at an extraordinary general meeting. The one-for-one issue was priced at 150p per share after a ten-for-one consolidation, making them equivalent to 15p per existing share. Payment is due by January 27.

Shares in Wickes, whose former senior managers are facing investigation by the Serious Fraud Office, were suspended at 6p on June 25. Analysts reckon that the shares are likely to start trading today at between 170p and 200p — equivalent to 17p to 20p before the consolidation — although bid speculation could drive them higher.

Kingsfisher, owner of the B&Q chain, is considered the most likely buyer of Wickes, although it may hang back to see whether any other potential buyers emerge. The other main contender is expected to be RMC's Great Mills. However, one analyst suggested that any bid was likely to be pitched low. "No one has been able to make money in this end of the DIY market," he said.

Michael von Brentano, chairman, told yesterday's meeting that Lord Sieff and Peter Humphries, former non-executive directors, have not yet waived their right to a pension from the company but were being encouraged to do so. Mr Brentano and Robert Burrow, deputy chairman, have already waived their right. The company also said that it expects to make further changes to the board in the near future.

Mr Brentano told shareholders that Wickes is discussing the sale of its continental European operations with a number of possible buyers.

Pennington, page 25

Woolwich share bonanza offers average of £1,200

By SARA MCCONNELL AND MARIANNE CURPHEY

THE Woolwich Building Society's 2.57 million members will receive shares worth more than £1,200 on average, up to a maximum of around £5,437 each, if they approve the society's conversion to a bank, set for July.

The Woolwich's transfer document published yesterday values the society at £2.96 billion and £3.38 billion. At the midpoint value of £3.17 billion, each share would be worth 187p.

All qualifying members — those with at least £100 in their accounts on December 31, 1995 and December 31, 1996 — will receive 450 free shares, worth £944 at the midpoint value. This is at the top end of analysts' predictions. The society's 530,000 borrowers and 910,000 of its savers will receive just this basic bonus.

Of the 2 million qualifying savers, 1.2 million had been members for more than two years with between £1,000 and £50,000 in their accounts and will qualify for an extra variable bonus as well. This bonus will be calculated on the lower of two balances on December 31, 1995 and February 11, 1997, the date of the special general meeting at which members will vote on the conversion proposals.

Qualifying savers with at least £1,000 will receive four free shares for each £100 in their account. On this basis, they will receive a minimum of 40 extra shares and a maximum of 2,000. They include 60,000 savers with balances of £50,000 or above and stand to gain the maximum bonus worth around £5,437.

Children will not vote on the conversion but will be entitled to a statutory cash bonus of 10 per cent of their balance if the account is in their name.

The Woolwich said yesterday that if it had known in advance about proposed changes to conversion rules contained in the new Building Societies Bill published in December, it would have pressed ahead with mergers and acquisitions before it came to the stock market.

Under the new proposals, societies that go on the acquisition trail after conversion will lose their five-year protection from hostile takeovers. The society is lobbying for the Bill to be rewritten to allow societies to complete friendly mergers without losing protection.

John Stewart, chief executive, said that if the Woolwich was "unfettered" by this rule he would be interested in "a building society in the North of the country". Analysts speculated that this was most likely to have been the Northern Rock, but could have included the Bradford & Bingley, Skipton and Yorkshire societies.

After the resignation last year of Peter Robinson, the society's former chief executive, after revelations of expenses irregularities, a number of organisations approached the society believing that it was in disarray and hoping to get it for a knock-down price. But none of the approaches reached the stage of negotiating prices or conditions, Mr Stewart said.

The Woolwich has appointed Schroders as its financial adviser and sponsor for the flotation, and BZW to act as broker.

There are still payments to come from the following societies:

- Alliance & Leicester 24 million members. Basic payout 250 shares worth £1,000 in April.
- Halifax 9 million members. Average payout of £1,000 in June.
- Northern Rock 1 million members. Average payout £1,000 in the autumn.
- Bristol & West 1 million members. Average payout, for members of more than two years' standing, £1,000 in the summer.



John Stewart with the Woolwich transfer document yesterday

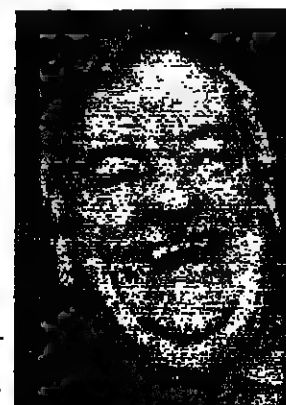
GB Railways makes express start on AIM

By FRASER NELSON

GB RAILWAYS, which last month won the Anglia rail franchise, more than doubled its market value yesterday when its shares started trading on the Alternative Investment Market.

The shares, placed with institutions at 100p, closed at 210p, leaving the start-up company valued at £18.4 million. This takes the value of the stake split between Michael Schabas and Max Steinfeld, two of its directors, to £2.44 million. The two each made a paper profit of £640,000 yesterday.

The company, chaired by Lord Sheppard of Didsbury and which started running the London to Norwich train service on Sunday, has raised £6.3 million from its flotation. It has pledged to spend £2 million on improving stations, to start a daily service between London and Great Yarmouth and serve Stratford station when the Jubilee Line extension opens. It must raise



Sheppard spending plans

Pressure grows for rise in rates

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

THE latest British money supply figures published yesterday support anecdotal evidence that the Christmas shopping season got off to a slow start but then enjoyed a lively late spurt.

Overall, retailers seem to have had a good month and many in the City now believe that the Chancellor will be under pressure from the Bank of England to raise base rates at the monetary meeting next Wednesday.

The narrow measure of money supply, M0, grew 0.9 per cent in December. Notes and coins in circulation — which account for the bulk of M0 with bankers' deposits making up the rest — rose 0.7 per cent. Although the relationship is far from certain, economists still look at growth in M0 as a guide to retail sales activity.

Annual growth in total M0 dipped to 7.1 per cent in November, largely because of

a strong burst of growth in the measure a year ago. However, year-on-year growth in the important notes and coins component stuck at 7.4 per cent.

The Government no longer targets M0 but has a monitoring range for growth in the measure of 0 to 4 per cent. Although few in the City believe that M0 points to anything like a 1980s boom, it has still been above its monitoring range for nearly four years. This is likely to contribute to the Bank's desire for higher rates.

David Bloom, of HSBC James Capel, said that he expects base rates to be raised by a quarter point after next week's meeting. Kevin Darlington, of Hoare Govett, agreed. He said that the Chancellor may have preferred to wait until February's meeting when fourth-quarter growth figures would have been published, but that these figures are expected to be strong in any case.

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Canon

Blue Circle workers put security before pay

By Philip Bassett
Industrial Editor

BLUE CIRCLE, the cement company, looks set to win approval tomorrow for a new long-term job security agreement with its employees after concluding a five-year partnership deal with its core fleet drivers.

The agreement, announced yesterday, covers only 124 drivers but a union delegate conference tomorrow is expected to agree a much larger deal covering up to 2,000 process staff and craft employees.

The drivers' deal, negotiated over the past 12 months by the company and the GMB general and TGWU transport unions, will give core

fleet drivers a 3.5 per cent pay rise in 1997, plus a £200 one-off payment. Core drivers' gross pay now averages £21,000. An hour will also be taken off the drivers' working week.

This will be followed by a pay freeze in 1998 — a controversial aspect of the agreement — and then for the following three years a new pay review body will look at Blue Circle drivers' pay in comparison with rates in other haulage companies. In return, drivers will carry out immediate maintenance of their lorries, and will be trained to operate fork-lift trucks to load them if no one else is available.

As well as such increased work flexibility, the deal includes a series of principles to "maximise" job security. These include not

reviewing the option of contracting-out the haulage fleet over the lifetime of the agreement, with all sides working to ensure that fleet costs remain competitive.

In addition, Blue Circle will review annually its fleet size demands on the basis of the year's quietest business quarter, and drivers will accept and help to develop in-cab "telematic" computer systems to monitor and improve performance.

Ron Webb, the TGWU's road haulage national officer, said: "This is a landmark agreement which guarantees the working conditions of drivers at Blue Circle until well into the next millennium." Three years ago, Blue Circle made 20 per cent of its workforce

redundant in the face of increasing competition in the building materials industry.

The likely deal tomorrow offers similar job security provisions to those of the drivers, and specifically includes extensive plans for NVQ-level training, with any redundancies being voluntary and staff relocated if necessary.

Allan Black, GMB national secretary, said: "Our members are telling us loud and clear that this is their top priority — not pay, but job security." He called on other companies in the construction industry and beyond to emulate Blue Circle's partnership approach and reach similar deals that would offer enhanced employment security and improve their efficiency and profitability.

General Accident cuts bonuses to life policyholders

By Gavin Lumsden

GENERAL ACCIDENT yesterday announced across-the-board cuts in annual bonuses to its two million life policyholders. The insurer denied that endowment policyholders would have to increase their premiums after it reduced the annual bonus by 0.25 per cent to 3.25 per cent.

The cut means GA is offering £54.914 to a 30-year-old male non-smoking £50 monthly premium payer on a mature 20-year policy, 5.4 per cent less than 12 months ago. However, maturity values on 25-year policies were up 2.4 per cent at £114,554, a record high.

Friends Provident, which

broadly maintained bonus rates for its 800,000 with-profit holders, also announced falls in endowment maturity values with a 20-year policy paying £52,688, £1,400 less than a year ago.

Friends Provident also cut final bonuses for pension holders in its life assurance (formerly NM) business with bonuses on 35-year policies reduced from 112.2 to 105 per cent and 18-year policies from 62.7 to 54 per cent.

On the investment side, GA said it had cut bonuses for lump-sum with-profits investors to 7.25 per cent from 7.5 per cent last year. A £5,000

lump sum invested five years ago has grown to £7,717, equivalent to a net annual yield of 9.1 per cent, compared with £7,894 for a similar investment maturing last year that yielded 9.56 per cent net.

The company sliced 0.5 per cent off pension bonuses leaving annuities at 6 per cent and compound bonuses on unitised with-profit business at 8.5 per cent. GA said customers who had paid £200 monthly premiums into a 20-year with-profit policy would retire with £277,810, more than £5,000 less than if they had retired a year ago.

GA estimated its total bonus bill will be £250 million.

In spite of the cut in rates, Peter Hales, assistant general manager, said GA aimed to double annual new business to £2 billion by the year 2000 by expanding its investment and pension business.

This month GA launches its first attack on the personal equity plan (PEP) market with FT-SE tracker and UK growth and income Peps. Mr Hales said pension business had doubled since its acquisition of Provident Mutual last January.

He also vowed that GA would in 1997 resolve all its 1,500 cases of pensions mis-selling scandal, after last year's publication by the Securities and Investments Board of a simpler questionnaire for aggrieved investors.



Robin Barr tested the Iro-Bru based drink in Scotland

Vendex in move to take over job agency

By Martin Barker

VENDEX International, the Dutch retail and business services group, has launched an agreed takeover bid worth Fr2.5 billion for Bis, the French employment agency.

Vendex also plans a separate Dutch house listing for its business services division, whose annual turnover will more than double to six billion guilders (£2 billion).

The separately listed company would be Europe's third biggest provider of temporary employment services and the Continent's second biggest in commercial cleaning services.

Details of the proposed takeover emerged after Vendex reached agreement with the family of Laurent Negro, the founder of Bis. Vendex will acquire the family's 60 per cent interest in the company for Fr490 a share. The company will also shortly make an offer for the publicly held shares, which trade on the Paris bourse.

Bis is France's third biggest temporary-help agency after Adecco and Manpower. In 1995, the company had turnover of Fr9.2 billion. Critics have said Bis has focused too much on France and has been left behind in the trend towards globalisation.

Vendex derived 1.9 billion guilders of its total 1995-96 turnover of 11.3 billion guilders from employment services. Vendex, its subsidiary, is active mainly in the Benelux countries, but ranks fifth in France and also operates in Spain and Germany.

Souped-up tippie cure heads south

By Sarah Cunningham

A PRE-MIXED drink combining Scotland's favourite cure for hangovers with a favourite means of causing them will soon be available south of the border.

The drink, which is the result of an agreement between AG Barr, maker of Iro-Bru, and United Distillers, producer of Bell's Whisky, was introduced in Scotland in October last year and has been warmly received there. Robin Barr, chairman of AG Barr, said yesterday: "It will be available in the rest of the UK later this year."

Sweet, bright orange Iro-Bru is firmly aimed at teenage buyers, but Mr Barr said the whisky-based version is not an alcoholic. "There is no carbonated style labelling and it is clearly shown to be a combination of the two products," he said.

AG Barr, which also makes Tizer and Orangina, yesterday reported pre-tax profits for the year ended October 26 of £5.04 million compared with £4.58 million a year ago. Last year's figure included an exceptional charge of £1.42 million.

The company increased its final dividend from 6.2p to 6.65p, making a full-year dividend of 8.65p (8.2p). It is payable on April 7.

Safety tests extend life of reactors

By Christine Buckley
Industrial Correspondent

NUCLEAR reactors at the stations that clouded the privatisation of British Energy have passed safety tests to continue generating for another 10 years.

Advanced gas-cooled reactors at Hunterston B and Hinkley Point B, both 20 years old, were cleared by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) to carry on to 30 years — the original plan for both stations. British Energy hopes to win extensions beyond that date.

The temporary closure of both for repairs sparked controversy for the flotation of British Energy when engineers moved in just hours before the end of the public offer for the shares. Applications were already in the post and private investors were unable to pull out of the float, which suffered a discount on its first day of trading.

The granting of safety permits for the next 10 years is the first major review of British Energy's advanced gas-cooled reactors by the NII.

British Energy lifted its generation in the year to December 31 more than 11 per cent against the previous year. Last year was fettered by problems at Dungeness B.

Prosecutors charge Schneider with fraud

PROSECUTORS investigating one of Germany's biggest corporate scandals have charged Jürgen Schneider with fraud. Outlining charges against the disgraced entrepreneur, the Frankfurt prosecutors' office alleged that Herr Schneider duped banks into extending credit by overstating net income and forging bills. Herr Schneider, whose property empire collapsed under more than DM5 billion of debt in 1994, has been charged with credit fraud, serious fraud and a bankruptcy offence. The charges could put him in jail for up to 15 years.

The prosecutors said that they had found no evidence of any wrongdoing by banks, contrary to repeated claims by Herr Schneider that his creditors had sabotaged him. The bankruptcy sparked fears of a German property slump, left hundreds of small craftsmen fighting for their livelihoods, and exposed the Schneider banks to public outrage at the apparent ease with which he obtained funding.

CityJet debt written off

CREDITORS of CityJet, the Irish airline that operates between London City Airport and Dublin, have agreed to write off almost Ir£6 million to facilitate the company's survival. The write-off is part of a restructuring plan put forward by an examiner appointed by the Dublin High Court. Key unsecured creditors agreed to accept 25p in the pound. They include London City Airport, whose share of the write-off is believed to be Ir£1.8 million.

ICI Canadian purchase

ICI Paints (Canada), a subsidiary of the UK chemicals group, has completed the purchase of St Clair Paint & Wallpaper Corporation, a distribution network of about 350 locations, made up of company-owned stores, franchisees and authorised dealers, throughout Canada. Current sales of the decorative business of ICI Paints (Canada) are C\$150 million (£65 million) and the acquisition will raise sales by about 75 per cent, and increase outlets to more than 1,100. The price was not disclosed.

R-R contracts out

ROLLS-ROYCE'S industrial power group has followed the company's aerospace division and contracted out its information-technology operations in a £300 million, ten-year deal. The arrangement with EDS, the same company chosen by the aerospace division, will mean that 160 staff will move from Rolls-Royce and EDS will take over responsibility for computing infrastructure, information systems and business applications.

Capital Shopping deal

CAPITAL SHOPPING CENTRES, the retail property company, has bought a 15.5 per cent interest in UK Prime Property Partnership from Pensions Funds LP and Zeneca Pensions Property Fund for £28.47 million. UK Prime owns 80 per cent of the Victoria Centre, Nottingham, and has a 50 per cent interest in the Grosvenor Centre, Sutton Coldfield, and the Elmsleigh Centre, Staines. CSC already owns 20 per cent of Victoria Centre through the Victoria Centre Partnership.

Monsanto's \$1bn buy

MONSANTO COMPANY is to pay up to \$1.02 billion to acquire three companies involved in hybrid seed production. It is buying Holden's Foundation Seeds Inc., a producer of parent seeds used by retailers to create hybrid seeds, Corn States Hybrid Service Inc., and Corn States International, the worldwide marketing and sales representatives for Holden's products. More than 35 per cent of US corn acres use genetic material developed by Holden's, Monsanto said.

Carr Sheppards sold

CARR SHEPPARDS, the UK portfolio manager and broker that looks after £25 billion, has been acquired by Investec, South Africa's fifth-largest banking group. The acquisitive South African combine is thought to have paid Banque Indosuez, former owner of Carr Sheppards, about £175 million to £180 million. Nearly all of Carr's 200 staff are expected to keep their jobs. French-owned Indosuez last year sold its 75 per cent stake in Gartmore, the fund manager, to NatWest.

Lloyd's breakthrough

NISSAN Fire & Marine, an association of Japanese companies including Hitachi, Nissan Motors and Dai-ichi Kangyo Bank, is to underwrite business at Lloyd's of London, the first such investment by a Japanese company. Syndicate 2323 will be managed by Murray Lawrence Corporate, a subsidiary of the Whittington Group and Murray Lawrence Holdings. The syndicate, formed by Nissan Lloyd's Underwriting, will write marine and non-marine business.

BA passenger record

BRITISH AIRWAYS set a passenger load factor record for December after an increase of one percentage point to 69.1 per cent compared with December 1995. It said mainline scheduled revenue passenger kilometres in December rose 9.9 per cent. Growth in long-haul traffic was 11.3 per cent, surpassing the 3.6 per cent growth on UK-Europe routes. Demand for the airline's premium brands remained firm, with traffic growth rising 6 per cent. Main cabin growth was 10.6 per cent.

General Cable venture

GENERAL CABLE CORPORATION, the American subsidiary of Wauson, has formed a joint venture with Spectra Corporation for the development, manufacture and marketing of fibre and optic cable for the data communications market. The new company will be known as General Photonics. General Cable's investment in the joint venture will amount to about \$6.5 million. General Cable manufactures copper wire and cable products.

AN EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER — THE TIMES

ENJOY A FREE DAY AT A HEALTH CLUB

Plus annual memberships worth £40,000 to be won

To coincide with the launch of our Discovery Diet Guide, *The Times* has teamed up with LivingWell and other leading health clubs to offer you up to six free visits to any of the participating clubs listed in yesterday's newspaper.

The offer allows you to use the same facilities at the health clubs as those enjoyed by full members. Simply present the voucher below when you go for your pre-booked visit.

Readers who take up this offer will be entered into a prize draw with a chance to win an annual health club membership to your chosen club. There are memberships worth £40,000 to be won.



THE TIMES FREE HEALTH CLUB DAY MEMBERSHIP VOUCHER AND PRIZE DRAW ENTRY DAY 2

This voucher entitles the bearer to a free day's membership at one of the health clubs listed in *The Times* on January 6 and 11, 1997. This voucher also acts as a prize draw entry coupon for the chance to win a free membership for a year to the winner's chosen health club. There are annual memberships worth a total of £40,000 to be won. The offer is valid until Friday February 28, 1997. This date is also the closing date for entry to the prize draw.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS 1. The offer is subject to availability. 2. Readers must book their visits in advance by telephone and state that they are using *The Times* offer. 3. This voucher must be presented when you turn up on the day. 4. The offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. 5. There will be additional charges for therapies. Please check what is included in the offer at the time of booking.

Title _____ Initials _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Day Tel _____

If you would prefer not to receive information and offers from organisations carefully selected by *The Times* please tick ☐

TERMS AND CONDITIONS 1. The offer is valid until February 28, 1997. 2. Your free visit(s) must be booked in advance by telephone quoting *The Times* offer. 3. The printed voucher(s) must be presented to the club when you make your visit(s). 4. Each voucher is only valid for one free visit. 5. A maximum of six free visits are allowed per reader. 6. No photocopies will be accepted. 7. The offer is subject to availability. 8. The offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. 9. There may be additional charges if you wish to book beauty treatments. 10. It is advisable to confirm what facilities are included in the offer at the time of booking.

CHANGING TIMES

Rumours drive shares into record book

Lanica's rise stuns brokers

By Jon Ashworth

THE City's latest wonder stock rose above £21 yesterday, as analysts mulled darkly about black tulips and South Sea Bubbles. Shares in Lanica Trust were worth just 137p three months ago, when Andrew Regan, a 31-year-old entrepreneur, appeared.

They have rocketed on persistent rumours that Littlewoods, the pools-to-stores group, is up to something with its retailing arm. The talk is of a deal involving Freemans, the mail-order arm of Sear's, with the whole package spun off in a separate

stock market listing. Tipsters have settled on Lanica.

Not since tulipomania gripped The Netherlands in the 1600s has there been anything like it. The shares closed at £18.50 on New Year's Eve, and powered on again yesterday, peaking at £21.50. Brokers were incredulous. One said: "One of these comes along once every ten years."

The gains say much for Mr Regan, whose father, Roger, is chief executive of Spring Ram, the kitchens-to-bathrooms group. He came to prominence in 1995, buying

the Co-op's food and drinks manufacturing arm, then selling it for £121 million after just seven months. He personally made £3 million on the deal.

Mr Regan resurfaced in October with a £4 million bid for New Guernsey Securities. He renamed it Lanica Trust and announced plans for an industrial holding company. The shares leapt 140p to 340p.

It could all go wrong, of course, but Lanica's share gain of 1,418 per cent by the end of 1996 secured Mr Regan's place in the City's history books.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE

	Bank	Unit
Australia \$	2.23	0.07
Austria Sch	13.76	13.14
Belgium F	37.59	53.25
Canada C	2.45	2.38
Ceylon C	0.85	0.78
Denmark Kr	10.70	9.00
Finland Mk	5.53	7.88
France F	6.55	6.55
Germany D	2.91	2.80
Greece Dr	435	410
Hong Kong \$	10.72	12.72
India Ru	46	0.89
Israel Sh	1.07	5.14
Italy Lit	0.25	2.58
Japan Yen	211.40	185.40
Norway Kr	6.55	0.56
Netherlands G	3.129	2.888
New Zealand \$	2.54	2.32
Norway Kr	250.20	217.00
Portugal Esc	270.50	268.00
Spain Ptas	166.64	7.75
Sweden Kr	12.41	11.81
Switzerland Fr	2.45	2.25
Turkey Lira	19.36	170.00
USA \$	1.790	1.800

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

□ Yellow card for followers of football fashion □ Double windfall for building society investors □ The class of 1996 (failed)

Coming home . . . to roost

ONE does not have to be out of sympathy with this country's infantile obsession with football to be worried about the prices that even the least appealing clubs are commanding on the stock market. This is a game that will have to end one day, and with more losers than winners.

Aside from greed, and attempts by mainly grown middle-class men to recapture childhood passions or establish some spurious street credibility, this hysteria is driven by the prospects for pay TV. Every club of any significance will have its own channel in the information era, some believe, and the addicts will have to pay, minute by minute, for their fix.

This optimism tempts teams from ever further down the rankings to seek quotations. The Media Intelligence Bulletin, the industry's leading research, has just published a useful demolition job which concludes that most quoted soccer clubs are, indeed, hopelessly overvalued.

It says that, by the year 2000, the market for pay per view TV will be 7.5 million homes, just twice the current level. Channels dedicated to individual clubs will not be viable, more profitable will be those given over to big games.

Liverpool and Newcastle, for example, can expect £15 million each. The also-rans get nothing. Of this windfall, half can be expected to be wasted on inflated salaries and transfer fees.

The Bulletin singles out loss-making Sunderland, struggling to stay in the Premier League. The only possible valuation is a multiple of turnover, of eight times last year's at the current share price. No business on earth can remain for ever on such a rating, yet if Sunderland slips from the top league, pay per view revenues will be minimal.

Football shares have always been 'dangerous' investments. First, they move according to the whims of a mischievous ball or a misplaced bet. Yesterday's rise for United and price fall for Spurs could as easily have been the other way around.

Second, the value to the fan is higher than to the ordinary investor, a distortion of the market. Add to that the unrealistic estimates being pumped around for pay TV — one of the highest would require every man, woman and child to watch 25 games a year, which makes

emigration an attractive option — and you have a disaster waiting to happen.

Most tellingly, the current football hysteria is driven by fashion, and a combination of unrelated events — last summer's Euro 96, which England, incidentally, failed to win, the odd best-selling book, and one of those self-reinforcing media feeding frenzies that always stops dead when a new fad emerges.

Investing in fashion has always been an easy way to lose money, from the hula hoop to the trendy but loss-making media or leisure conglomerates of today. You have been warned.

Empire-building with the Woolwich
WHEN Peter Robinson left the Woolwich last year after allegations that he misused company facilities during his brief spell as chief executive, the future of the society looked shaky and predators arrived immediately, notably the Prudential.



to conversion, making ambitious comments about acquisitions and warning hostile bidders not to bother unless they are prepared to pay a hefty premium. This is what any business would say in such circumstances. But the Woolwich's half-year figures were better than some had expected, and the approaches dried up after they were published, while that premium presumably rose.

A further recovery for the housing market can only push it higher, as the society depends on people wanting to spend and borrow. That recovery looks certain, double-digit house price inflation is expected this year — even if 50 per cent over the next three years, according to a well-

leaked forecast from Savills due today, looks over-optimistic.

When the Woolwich first decided to convert, the society considered merging with a fellow building society such as Northern Rock, to pander to the fashion for financial services groups as huge one-stop shops. The Building Societies Bill, which penalises newly converted societies that turn acquisitive by removing their own five-year protection from hostile takeovers, made directors reconsider. It may decide, in the end, that it is willing to take the risk and go ahead with a spending spree anyway.

Penny of institutions, many overseas, would like to have greater exposure to the UK financial services market. If Woolwich were to buy a mutual life insurer to provide the pensions products that it lacks at present, it would become even more attractive to any purchaser.

So here is a final thought. Angela Knight's much-derided legislation accelerated the arrival of all those fat bonuses because a merger would have taken years to finalise before any

flotation could take place. And Woolwich members who hang onto their shares could well be in for a second windfall.

Cautionary tale of troubled trio
TWELFTH NIGHT, and a good day for clearing away the rubbish from 1996. Costain saw the final removal of small investors from the running of the company; Wickes cleared the way for its shares to be quoted again.

Neither was a good advert for popular capitalism. Costain was hopelessly mismanaged; the shares' long decline had been well signalled, but it took five dividend-free years and three expensive rights issues to bring the company to this state, rather a long period for the normal flow of funds from company to investors to be reversed. Wickes was the fault of fraud and of the auditors appointed to prevent it, although shareholders, of course, paid the price.

The third of the class of 1996 (failed), and the worst, has been overlooked. This was the col-

lapse, only two years after the finest minds in the City sanctioned the business for flotation, of Chamberlain Phipps. There were doubts expressed over the float, and the dominant role played by Dan Sullivan, the chairman and chief executive. Within a year, the business was in chaos.

Chamberlain Phipps came to the market with a value of £74 million. When it collapsed, in August, the company was worth minus £50 million, the size of the debt. In other words, 20 months' worth of turnover disappeared in 24 months. And nobody noticed. The remaining businesses should be sold by the spring, but none of the proceeds will go to shareholders. One final irony: the plug was pulled on this footwear maker, before the winter season, because of the weather. It was too good.

The rights result
THE disaster that has befallen the Azlan rights issue — an issue that was never going to be popular with investors — has its positive side. The company has the money anyway. The buyers' strike suggests institutions are becoming more cautious with their money — that is, yours and mine — despite the City old-pals' act that is supposed to ensure such disasters never happen.

Raytheon victory aids US defence shake-up

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

THE RAPID consolidation of the US defence industry took another significant step forward yesterday with the \$3 billion purchase by Raytheon of the weapons division of Texas Instruments.

The cash deal is Raytheon's third purchase of a defence company in the past two years and beat a rival offer from Northrop Grumman, another defence company.

The Texas Instruments division, which was put up for sale last year, employs 12,000 people and is expected to have revenues of \$1.8 billion in 1996. It supplies precision-guided missiles, airborne radar and other electronic warfare systems. Raytheon said that the acquisition, which is likely to be completed

by the middle of this year, was expected to dilute its earnings.

Debris Picard, Raytheon's chairman, said: "We are buying a growing world-class business that competes successfully in several key defence electronics markets where Raytheon is not a significant participant."

The purchase will boost Raytheon's total annual revenues to about \$15 billion. Analysts speculated that the purchase was designed to help Raytheon's bid for Hughes Electronics, the defence arm of General Motors, which is expected to cost about \$9 billion. The Hughes bidding is expected to be decided in the next few days and may determine the final shape of the US defence

industry. If Raytheon wins that, as well as taking control of the TI defence division, it will have pulled far ahead of Northrop, which will be left in a weak position in the newly consolidated industry.

To strengthen its position, Raytheon has been involved in a dash for growth over the past two years, buying E-Systems for \$2.3 billion in 1995 and Chrysler's defence electronics business for \$475 million last year.

GM wants to be paid in shares by the buyer of Hughes and may consider Raytheon a stronger company than Northrop after its purchase of the TI defence business. The acquisition follows the \$14 billion purchase of McDonnell Douglas, the aircraft manu-

facturer, by Boeing shortly before Christmas. The Boeing deal, which creates the world's largest aircraft company, is the biggest defence deal since the industry began to consolidate four years ago, when the Cold War ended and US defence spending slumped.

Texas Instruments said that it was selling its defence interests in order to focus more closely on its main business of computers and civilian electronics.

Analysts said that Raytheon appeared to be paying too much for the Texas Instruments assets, but conceded that the deal made good strategic sense. One analyst said: "TI was a must win. That takes care of the first priority, to get that under their belt."

Knickerbox poised for restructuring

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

SHARES of Apple Computer plunged after a profit warning at the company prepares to outline its strategy to thousands of customers and programmers at its annual Macworld trade show today.

The troubled computer manufacturer said that it would make an operating loss of between \$100 million and \$150 million in the last quarter because of weak retail demand over Christmas. Apple said a shortage of its Powerbook laptops was also to blame.

The news sent the shares down by about \$4 to \$18, a third of their level a year ago. The company said that revenue for the quarter to December 27 will be down by about 10 per cent from the \$2.3 billion for the same period last year.

The poor performance suggests that Apple's hoped-for recovery may be faltering and that the strategy constructed by Gilbert Amelio, chief executive, will have to be altered.

Mr Amelio said that Apple will have to reduce its expenses by a further \$1 billion to about \$3 billion a year. This will require another round of redundancies on top of the 1,300 job losses announced last year. Mr Amelio says that revenues are unlikely to start growing until 1998.

Apple is bruised by profit warning

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Sears left with just 100 shops

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

SEARS has sold 210 of the stores it received back when Stephen Hinchcliffe's Facia empire collapsed in May, and it is close to disposing of another 63 (Jason Nisse writes).

This leaves only 100 on Sears' hands. These shops, which housed Saxon, Freeman Hardy Willis and Trueform shoe stores, have been closed and are being marketed by two firms of surveyors, Healey & Baker and Eric Young & Co.

Sears made a £25 million provision to cover the cost of selling the shops. Much of it has now been used but Sears does not believe it will have to make any further charges. To offload the stores more quickly, Sears is offering a store card with £2,000 credit to the individual agents who strike the deals.

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Newman Tonks attacks FKI's record overseas

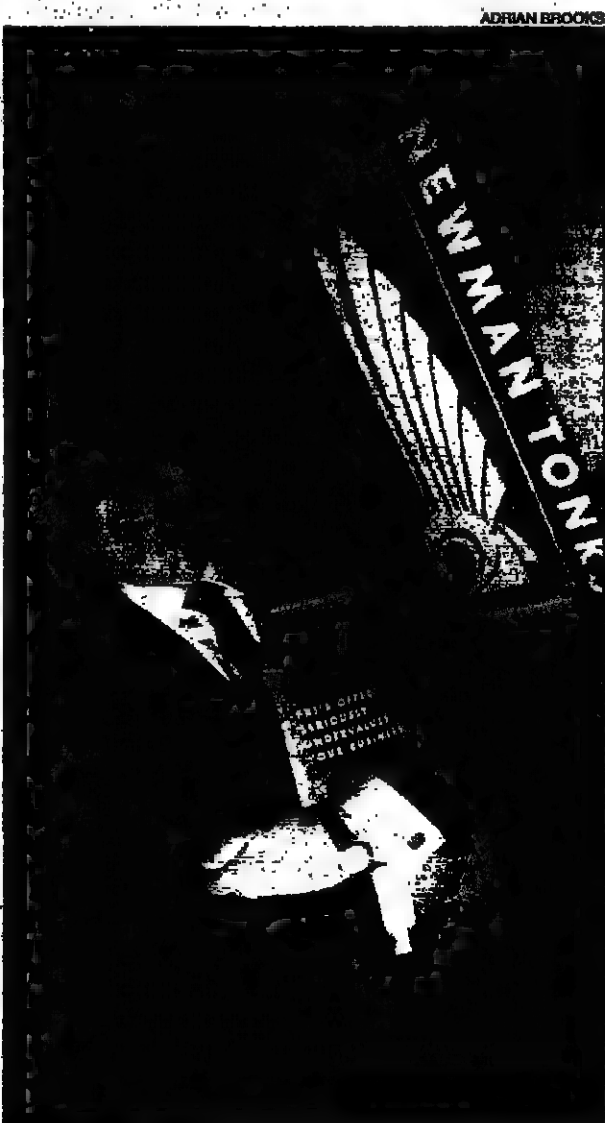
By PAUL DORMAN

NEWMAN TONKS, the door fittings group contesting a £196 million takeover bid from FKI, yesterday attacked the bidding company's "impressive" record of managing its overseas businesses.

In a defence document to shareholders, Newman Tonks said FKI's profits outside the UK and the US had fallen from £5.6 million to £2 million since 1992. The profit margins on these businesses had fallen from 8 to 1.7 per cent, and the return on assets from 27.6 to 7.2 per cent.

Jeff Whalley, FKI's chairman, dismissed this and Newman Tonks's other criticisms as "pretty thin". FKI makes most of its money in North America, has increased profits in each of the past five years, and is this year heading for a total of more than £100 million, Mr Whalley said.

"They're struggling hard to find something to defend themselves with," he added.



Geoff Gahan with document contesting FKI bid

Record sales for Orange and One 2 One

By PAUL DORMAN

ORANGE and One 2 One, the mobile telephone companies, reported record quarterly sales figures yesterday, boosting the sector's share prices.

Orange said it added 125,000 new customers in the final quarter of 1996, an improvement on 116,000 the year before. It ended the year with more than 785,000 subscribers, 406,000 more than a year ago.

One 2 One, the smallest of the four mobile phone companies, attracted 85,000 new customers in the quarter, compared with 35,000 in the final quarter of 1995. This lifted its total to 545,000. It began 1996 with 375,000 subscribers.

The share prices of Orange, Vodafone and Cable & Wireless, the company that created One 2 One, were under pressure in the second half of 1996 because of fears that growth in sales of mobile phones was slowing. Robert Millington, BZW analyst, said the industry's fourth-quarter figures were the only set to show an improvement over 1995.

Orange shares closed 5p up at 193p, and Cable & Wireless 5p higher at 472p. Vodafone rose 7p to 251p and Securitor, which owns a large stake in Celfnet, edged 1p up to 178p.

Orange says it now has 11.5 per cent of the mobile phone market. Its share of net growth of the market is 29 per cent.

SFA ponders next step on Barings

By ROBERT MILLER
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

SENIOR executives of the City watchdog still pressing charges against certain former officials of Barings meet today to discuss the remaining disciplinary cases.

Top of the agenda for members of the enforcement committee of the Securities and Futures Authority, the regulator for fund managers, are the largely failed prosecutions of Ron Baker and Mary Walz. None of the parties involved is expected to appeal against the findings of the SFA's independent tribunal, and the committee,

headed by Rod Sinclair, is likely to sanction announcement of the Baker and Walz settlements later this week.

Mr Baker and Ms Walz, who unsuccessfully sued Barings for her £500,000 bonus, faced a series of SFA charges relating to supervision of Nick Leeson, the rogue trader whose dealings on Far East money markets caused the £830 million collapse of Barings almost two years ago.

In November the SFA's independent tribunal found in Mr Baker's favour on four of the five charges against him, and, on the fifth, handed down a public reprimand and levied costs of £7,500.

Soon after, the SFA reached a broadly similar agreement with Ms Walz.

In view of the SFA's mixed prosecution record against former Barings executives, the enforcement committee could call for a review of the remaining two cases, against Ian Hopkins, widely seen as the whistleblower who tried to draw attention to Leeson's dealings, and James Bax, the trader's boss in the merchant bank's Singapore office. The SFA has pencilled in a tribunal hearing this month for Mr Hopkins and next month for Mr Bax.

City Diary, page 27

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TT 71/97

STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Shares rise but worries make investors hesitant

SHARE prices on the London stock market crawled back above 4,100 to close just 12 points shy of its record high.

But it was a lacklustre performance as worries about an imminent rise in interest rates came back to haunt investors. This theory was reinforced by another strong performance from sterling, which served to undermine the big dollar earners among the top 100 shares and, in turn, hold back the market's progress.

Equities were hesitant in early trading, as investors worried about the prospect of further volatility on Wall Street. The FT-SE 100 index finished 17.0 up at 4,106.5, with 682 million shares traded.

More brokers are taking the view that investors may have seen the best of the retail sector for the time being. Trading statements due out from the leading stores group over the next few weeks are expected to show that business was lively in the run-up to Christmas. But the prospect of an imminent rise in interest rates could mean that any improvement to margins may be short-lived.

Dixons, steady at 543p, is due to give a trading update this week with brokers hoping it has led the recovery with sales of electrical goods sharply higher. Some of them are already forecasting that profits may be up 50 per cent.

Argos, down 7p at 751p, is also due to report on Friday along with Sear's. Other companies expected to give trading statements soon include Boots, up 7p at 626p, and Next, 4p better at 770p.

Also in the retail sector, WH Smith climbed a further 11p to 467p on vague talk of a bid with Tesco, 1p cheaper at 350p, mentioned as a possible predator.

A sharp jump in new subscribers towards the end of last year lifted Orange 5p to 193p. They coincide with a similar improvement from One-2-10, owned by Cable and Wireless, up 5p at 472p, and follow Vodafone's numbers last week. Vodafone rose 7p to 251p.

National Westminster Bank rose 9p to 706p with Panmure Gordon, the broker, also taking a shine to the shares. Last week Credit Lyon-



Hugo Bovill, left, and Stephen Ashton of Treant, down 20p

nals Laing was pushing NatWest, claiming it was the cheapest in the sector and could hit 900p. Panmure is also said to like the look of Barclays Bank, up 12p at £10.06, and HSBC, 34p stronger at £13.23.

Still no time for a breather at Laziza Trust, where the price reached £21.50 before retreating to close a further

business. Sear's was steady at 94p yesterday after announcing plans to dispose of 200 shoe shops.

Speculative buying lifted Frank Usher, the ball gown maker, 8p to 176p after Nigel Wray of Fleet Newsletter fame snapped up 427,500 shares, or almost 6 per cent of the company. Nigel Wray is also being tipped to take over

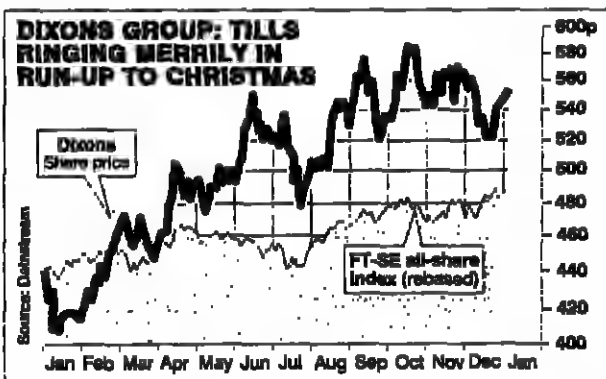
Smith & Nephew has been a dull market, falling from a peak of 216p in October to a low of 175p. The price firmed 3p to 181p yesterday after a meeting with brokers. Trading during the fourth quarter lived up to expectations and the feared deterioration in its markets has failed to materialise.

67p dearer at £20.50. The shares have risen from 95p during the past year, fuelled by Andrew Regan's decision to take control of the company.

There is talk he is putting together another attractive deal which could see privately owned Littlewoods reverse its retail operations into Lanica. Littlewoods is currently in talks with Sear's about acquiring Freemans, its mail order

Nottingham Forest, the struggling Premiership side.

There was certainly no shortage of action among the growing number of publicly quoted football clubs. Celtic, the Scottish Premier League side, led the way with a hefty jump of £100 to £525 as plans were mooted for a new British Super League, which would include both Celtic and Rangers. West Bromwich Albion,



a newcomer, ran into profit-taking and lost £30 at £250. The shares were originally listed on the Alternative Investment Market last Friday at £100 a piece. The listing for West Brom was its second fund-raising exercise in less than a year.

Manchester United was rewarded with a rise of 22p to a new high of 687p after its swift move into the fourth round of the FA Cup with a two-goal win over Tottenham Hotspur, down 3p at 621p. Chelsea Village rose 2p to 124p after it dumped Liverpool out of the cup.

Towry Law slipped 1p to 39p. Roger Cooper, who had been operating as finance director, has left the company with "immediate effect".

Treant, which is headed by Hugo Bovill, managing director, with Stephen Ashton, finance director, fell a further 20p to 150p as the group weighed in with a profits setback and caution about current prospects. Pre-tax profits last year at the fragrance and flavours group tumbled from £3.54 million to £1.52 million.

It was full steam ahead for GB Railway in first-time dealings after a placing at 100p. It opened at 160p and quickly accelerated through the 200p level, touching a peak for the day of 237p before closing at 210p, a premium of 110p.

Newman Tonks's defence document received a lukewarm reception with the price firming 1p to 150p. But it remains 3p shy of the terms being offered by FKL, 4p better at 205p.

GILT-EDGED: Worries about a rate rise came back to haunt the bond market where prices suffered falls stretching to 1p in a slow start to trading. The worst losses were recorded at the longer end of the market. The latest money supply figures made little impact on sentiment.

In futures the March series of the long gilt dropped £2.22 to £108.16 in thin trading that saw just 37,000 contracts completed. Treasury 8 per cent 2005 fell £1.22 to £101.22, while Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was one tick off at £102.22.

NEW YORK: Shares rose strongly in early trading as growing optimism about the US economy boosted cyclical and technology stocks. The Dow Jones industrial average was 71.96 points higher by midday at 6,616.05.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 6616.05 (+71.96)
S&P Composite 753.15 (+5.12)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 19446.00 (+64.63)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 13442.93 (+221.14)

Amsterdam:
EOE index 652.94 (+6.89)

Sydney:
AO 2098.8 (+10.3)

Frankfurt:
DAX 281.32 (+22.00)

Singapore:
Straits 245.72 (+21.64)

Brussels:
General 10871.56 (+52.89)

Paris:
CAC-40 2306.67 (+25.91)

Zurich:
SIX Gen 880.30 (+7.80)

London:
FT 100 4106.5 (+17.0)
FTSE Mid 250 4517.4 (+23.8)
FTSE 250 2041.7 (+4.0)
S&P 500 1440.0 (+12.2)
FT All-Share 2012.9 (+8.88)
FT Non Financials 2011.2 (+6.79)
FT Financials 115.54 (+0.53)
FT Govt Secs 92.33 (+0.30)
Bargains 29491
SEAD Volume 682.5m
USM (Midstream) 1.6844 (-0.0072)
German Mark 2.4360 (+0.0024)
Exchange Index 46.7 (+0.1)
Bank of England official close (p.m.) 1.3599
EBCU 1.1792
RPI 153.9 Nov (2.7%) Jan 1987=100
RPI 153.7 Nov (2.7%) Jan 1987=100

RECENT ISSUES

Aquarius 172p ...
BZW Endowment Red 53p ...
Cadcentre 276 + 7p ...
Cell Telecom (275) 290p ...
Crown Leisure 80p ...
Epicure Network 59p ...
Epicure Network 59p ...
Gib Railways 210p ...
Hardy Underwing 195p ...
Henderson Tech C 355 + 7p ...
Highams Systems 150 - 25p ...
Linden 163p ...
Necral 48p ...
On-Line 82p - 15p ...
Oxford Biomedica 65p ...
Parkwood Holdings 75p - 2p ...
Pilot Tech 59p ...
SDX Business Sys 206p + 6p ...
Sanctuary Music (85) 65p ...
Scott Highland Hills 745p ...
Sunderland 745p ...
Sutton Harbour 129p - 1p ...
West Bromwich Alb 250 - 30p ...
Xenova 210p ...
Yeoman Group 157p ...

RIGHTS ISSUES

Blocompables n/p 377p ...
Fisher n/p (120) 26 - 1p ...
RPC n/p (142) 6 ...
Shafesbury n/p (137) 19p ...

MAJOR SHANGES

RISES:
Parland 203p (+11p)
Albe 281p (+11p)
ML Laboratories 240p (+10p)
Acad Hodge 304p (+10p)
Gearhouse Gp 330p (+13p)
Johnson Math 571p (+18p)
First Tech 865p (+18p)
Br Land 828p (+13p)
Smith WH 487p (+11p)
FALLS:
Waco 91p (-12p)
Treant 150p (-20p)
Worm Com 350p (-35p)
Druck 490p (-10p)
Andrew Sykes 490p (-10p)
BTR 228p (-9p)
Closing Prices Page 29

Off the rails

PRIVATISED industries generally start life in a Big Bang: the water and electricity companies were dismantled into regional regions. Fragmentation created the illusion of competition (in the case of the utilities, the competition was for the loyalty of shareholders, not customers). But the big bang of privatisation is followed eventually by a gravitational pull to the centre. After fragmentation, you get consolidation and sooner or later, the rail franchisees will gobble each other up.

The implosion could be profitable for some investors but at the moment the excitement about train operators looks overdone. Unlike the water or electricity companies or even Railtrack, companies such as GB Railways and Prism have no track record and more important, no assets other than the right to

run a rail service for a limited period. Even that right is heavily circumscribed by price controls and the requirement to maintain capacity levels. Heavy fixed costs, in the form of access charges to the rail network and train leasing costs leave limited scope for margin improvement, other than by cutting staff.

Will there be growth in the top line? Train operators are achieving 5 per cent revenue increases but much of that is from eliminating fare dodgers, rather than new passengers. With ever smaller subsidies, these companies are indeed highly risky - in the rail sector, they are the airlines to Railtrack's BAA. One of the early investors, such as Stagecoach, might become a British Airways but, unlike BAA, the train operators cannot shut down unprofitable routes. Should revenues fall, we could see insolvencies as well as takeovers.

Orange

FINAL-QUARTER sales figures from Orange and One 2 One breathed life into moribund mobile phone shares. After nine months of doldrums, the year ended with solid, if unspectacular, year-on-year progress.

Behind the headline numbers, the detail of the figures looked equally encouraging. A big worry about the mobile phone companies is the way they sell the hardware like so much bankrupt stock. With phones (seemingly) available for less than a tanner, there are serious concerns about the quality of customers and the security of revenue flows. Indeed, the industry loses nearly three out of every ten customers that it attracts.

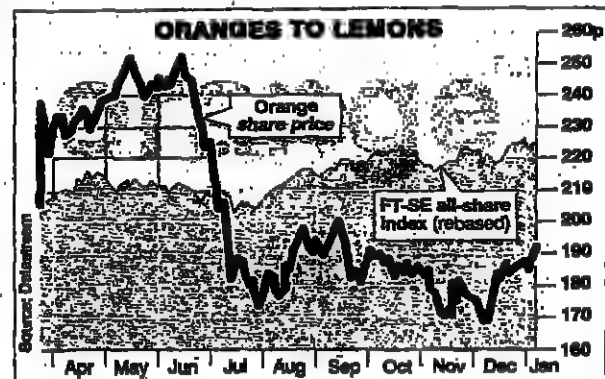
Orange, at least, is faring better, holding its "churn" rate at a little above 18 per cent. The company argues

that even this figure overstates the problem, since it operates a 14-day cooling off period for new customers. One 2 One also claimed a consistent monthly improvement in its disconnection rates, although it is too shy to reveal figures.

Better still, Orange reported a substantial increase in the proportion of new cus-

tomers opting for its higher usage Talk60 plans. As mobile phones make the transition from toy to tool, customers use their phones more readily and revenues will benefit.

Orange shares ran ahead too quickly on their initial flotation but have since fallen too far. There is value here.



Engineering

DOES a flurry of bids for metalbushers mean the engineering sector is now in play? Two bids are underway: William Cook is fighting an offer from Triplex Lloyd, while Fairway has set its sights on Burnfield. After three years of recovery, some are expecting engineering bids galore.

Certainly, engineering stocks have enjoyed a good run: the sector managed growth of 22 per cent last year, twice the rate of increase in the market as a whole. Expectations of better order books and profits are driving shares ahead and the sudden appearance of bids arouses speculation that activity might spread to eternal underperformers such as Simon Engineering and APV.

More consolidation looks certain but the targets are unlikely to feature the sector's ugly ducklings. The problem is sterling and dull European markets. Companies like APV compete

heavily on price, selling process control and materials handling equipment to relatively low-growth sectors such as food manufacturing. Margins are pitifully thin and the strong pound hurts companies that sell abroad.

Last year's strong growth in the sector was mainly the work of a small number of large companies, such as British Aerospace, Smiths Industries and Siebe. If there is bid activity in the sector, it will involve makers of less price-sensitive products in growth markets. That suggests the defence and automotive sectors where the customer is seeking supplier consolidation: in the former case for political reasons while in the latter case, car manufacturers are seeking better logistics. Mere metalbushers will still struggle.

This is unlikely to suffice, Newman has failed to address the issue of why its margins are so poor. Two big shareholders have abandoned ship and the best shareholders can now hope for a rival bid for the company.

The Newman camp hints darkly that there may be other bidders - but Christmas comes but once a year.

EDITED BY CARL MORTSHED

COMMODITIES

LIFE
Cocoa
Mar 97 90.000 May 92.000
Jul 91.000 Sep 93.000
Oct 94.000 Dec 95.000
Jan 96.000 Mar 97.000
Apr 98.000 Jun 99.000
Jul 100.000 Sep 101.000
Oct 102.000 Dec 103.000
Jan 104.000 Mar 105.000
Apr 106.000 Jun 107.000
Jul 108.000 Sep 109.000
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Jul 628.000 Sep 629.000
Oct 630.000 Dec 631.000
Jan 632.000 Mar 633.000
Apr 634.000 Jun 635.000
Jul 636.000 Sep 637.000
Oct 638.000 Dec 639.000
Jan 640.000 Mar 641.000
Apr 642.0

THE TIMES
CITY DIARY

To be or not to be

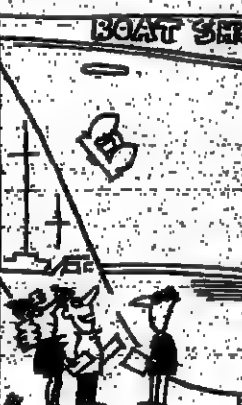
SO, THE executive directors at the Woolwich Building Society have agreed to waive any conditions that they may have as qualifying employees, but what of Peter Robinson? Whether the estranged chief executive, now an adviser to Direct Line, is a qualifying investor or borrowing member remains a moot point.

Persistent Cook

METAL-BASHING and poetry are not obvious bedfellows. But flicking through the company profile for William Cook, I stand corrected. Underneath a picture of Andrew Cook, chief executive of the steel castings group, is a quote from Calvin Coolidge, the former US president. Fighting off a hostile bid from Triplex Lloyd, here is a taste of *The Cook Guiding Principles*. "Press on. Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent, without it, is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius, without it, is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination are omnipotent."

Family backing

WITH talk of family values at fever pitch, spare a thought for the Hopkinson. As the SRA disciplinary committee gathers today to decide the fate of *Barings*, 140 "family-owned" companies have the backing of the bank. Valerie and two children, endured of *Barings* to Treasury Select Committee evidence.



THE deadline for applications for the Spoken Business Awards is January 13. Open to business executives resident in any EU country, the first prize is a return ticket to Japan, and £1,500 cash.

Art form

AN UNEXPECTED name crops up alongside that of Sir Nicholas Goodison on the committee of the National Art Collections Fund. David Land, chairman of the Loot Group, and the brain behind the hugely successful free ads paper. The Italian entrepreneur turns out to be an expert on Renaissance prints. With Rupert Hambro also on the committee, it appears that Land has hit upon a new venture. "It's a shame we don't have a section in the paper selling second-hand directorships," he chuckles.

Driving force

NEWS that Henderson Investments, the independent fund manager, is to sponsor the Williams Formula One grand prix racing team will have come as no surprise to Jonathan Berry, its Pepsi administrator. Berry is an avid racing fan and brother-in-law of Frank Williams, managing director of Williams Grand Prix Engineering.

GOOD news for fat cats. The Water Services Association, which represents the nine largest privatised water companies, is the chief sponsor behind Egon Ronay's guide to bistros, bars and cafes.

MORAG PRESTON



Sandy Anderson made £36 million when the market valued Porterbrook at some £300m more than the price at which the Government sold it

What price value aboard the privatisation express?

Fraser Nelson on the men who may come to be known as fat-cat controllers

Railways, which once vied with nuclear fuel as being the least attractive asset on the public auction block, are taking their place among the market's wonder stocks. GB Railways, which more than doubled in value on its market debut yesterday, is the second pure railway company to come to the market. It did so after picking up the Anglia rail franchise, and shareholders, who have collectively enjoyed an instant paper profit of £9.67 million, are looking forward to further profits if the company wins the Thameslink franchise as well.

Of the 25 rail routes that were part of the £44-billion privatisation, 18 have been allocated and ten have become quoted companies. Offers for the seven remaining lines close this month, and the last sale — of InterCity West Coast — will be made by the end of March. The rail industry's journey from the state to the market is on course to be completed in little more than three years.

On the face of it, this should give the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising (OPRF), which is running the auction, grounds for self-congratulation. Railways, it says, have long suffered from a lack of investment; private companies are keen to make. Not only do the new rail routes take a loss-making company off the hands of the state, they promise to pour millions into new trains, with a more frequent service and cheaper fares. It is, the argument goes, good for the passenger, good for the Government, good for Britain.

But as the directors of GB Railways toast the instant £2.07 million paper profit they made in less than an hour, questions are being asked about whether the assets are being transferred too cheaply to the private sector. Either their new owners are working such magic that their value has shot up in a matter of months, or they picked up the goods for a song.

GB Railways's market surge came on the day the National Audit Office revealed that it is looking into the sale of Porterbrook, the rail coaches leasing company. Sold to its management as a debt-ridden liability for £57 million this time last year, Porterbrook was bought, seven months later, by Stagecoach for £825 million. This left a handsome £300 million for the buyout.

investors to share, and made eight days' work worth £36 million to Sandy Anderson, managing director, and £4 million to Peter Watson, chairman.

As the National Audit Office begins its investigation, the Government's claim that rail companies are cash-draining liabilities is beginning to lose ground very quickly. To miss out on £300 million of what should have been taxpayers' money suggests that the Government was, at best, guilty of bad timing, and, at worst, gross commercial naivety.

The Government argues that the price at which it sold Porterbrook reflected the risk it was passing on. But its valuation of that risk is at great variance to the market's view. The National Audit Office is also expected to look into whether similar miscalculations marked the sales of Angel Trains Contracts and Eversholt Leasing.

Rail franchises, by contrast, are awarded on a seven-year basis, and their owners are also paid by OPRF. GB Railways is being paid a £38.9 million subsidy in its first year, and has since raised £6.8 million from coming to the City. OPRF shrugs its shoulders.



Richard Branson would have TVs on his Cross Country trains

It says its job is merely to arrange a suitor for its franchisees, secure investment pledges, and wish good luck to the directors if they can become millionaires thereafter. It is not actually selling anything, and can hardly demand a better price.

The market, meanwhile, is getting very excited. Richard Hannah, transport analyst at UBS, says that the City sees far more value in rail companies than the Government has envisaged.

He says: "Given the years of poor management under public ownership, the potential of these companies under private sector management is substantial. At the moment, rail accounts for about 5 per cent of passenger miles, which is amazingly low. The private sector has done a great job on sorting out transport companies which were underperforming under state ownership, and there is no reason to believe that rail will be any exception."

Mr Hannah attributes the missing millions — now being pocketed by the new franchise holders — to the difference in opinion between the Government and the City as to the value of the franchises. "The balance is in the favour of the rail companies at the moment but this may well change: there may be unforeseen circumstances which prevent the potential being realised," he said.

The management manoeuvres of the new franchise holders do little to contradict his argument. Midland Main Line, owned by National Express, is offering free coffee to all its customers, a break from the exorbitant buffet bar fares of old. Great North Eastern Railways, which runs the service between London and Edinburgh, offers a £19 return fare, to combat airline fares of £58.

Another imaginative newcomer to railways is Richard Branson, whose Virgin Rail Group started running the Cross Country trains franchise yesterday. Mr Branson wants to add aircraft-style mini televisions to passenger seats, an innovation few civil servants would have agreed to in the years of state control. The results are already beginning to show. National Express has started offering £29 family tickets on the London to Sheffield line, and has seen the number of weekly passengers grow from 13,500 to 16,000. Railtrack, which runs the stations, has attracted coffee shops, sold its advertising space, and seen its shares shoot from 38p to 59p.

It seems that not even the prospect of a Labour government will quell the market's enthusiasm for railways. A Blair election victory and the possibility of subsequent deregulation is the last liability that the new railway companies could face. The City take the view that Labour believes that the worst offence has already been committed — that of selling public assets for a song.

As the nation enjoys its £19 returns to Scotland, free coffees and perhaps even in-train television, the consensus is that Labour would conclude that it had come to power too late to reverse all of that, and that the wisest policy would be to let the private market baffle it out for customers.

Only now is the market's enthusiasm for railway stocks beginning to be fully apparent. With that, the gulf between what the Government sold its railway franchises for and what they now appear to be worth is on track to dwarf the £300 million lost in the sale of Porterbrook.

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Fresh thinking and the deficit

There are just three things wrong with the economic outlook for Britain in 1997 and beyond. First and foremost there is the threat that the pound will continue to strengthen, pushed up by the clamour for higher interest rates from the Bank of England.

Secondly, there is the reason the Bank's demand for tighter monetary policy will be justified. Spending in Britain is growing substantially faster than output, even though I suspect that official figures will show Christmas sales to have been less buoyant than many experts thought. If spending continues to outpace production, inflation and an unsustainable trade gap are bound to result, even if the pressures take several years to build up.

The third economic problem is the Government's budget deficit. This remains

in taxes would be impossible. The hopes of significant cuts in public spending beyond those already assumed by the Treasury seemed even more forlorn, particularly after the pledges to improve popular public services that both main parties would surely make.

However, I have begun to have second thoughts after Mr Clarke's Budget and publication of the detailed Finance Bill. The Budget showed an unexpected flowering of imagination at the Treasury. Instead of just going for the "usual suspects" — higher rates of VAT and national insurance and lower personal allowances, the mandarins focused their attention on the many loopholes and abuses that riddle the tax system. The Finance Bill showed an equal seriousness at the Inland Revenue and the Customs and Excise in tackling elaborate

The Budget showed an unexpected flowering of imagination by Treasury mandarins

avoidance schemes that cost the Exchequer many billions of pounds. The possibility raised by this unexpected outbreak of lateral thinking is that budget deficits could, after all, be reduced substantially by the next Government. The politicians will doubtless pledge to keep their grubby hands off income tax, VAT and national insurance, but this would still leave a plethora of opportunities to expand the tax base. The last Budget, which raised an additional £4 billion annually in "low-visibility" taxes, offered only a hint of what a determined Chancellor could achieve.

Just one reform — the abolition of the dividend imputation system that subsidises British pension funds and encourages UK companies to pay out dividends instead of reinvesting profits — could raise up to £5 billion a year. A second obvious reform — the removal of mortgage tax relief — would yield more than £3 billion and would come at the perfect time to dampen an incipient house price boom. A third useful measure would be simply to accelerate the phasing out of profit related pay. Between them, such seemingly technical changes could transform the next Government's fiscal position, as well as the outlook for interest rates and the pound.

A more urgent reason for reducing the deficit is to restrain spending and, therefore, the inflationary risks. A tighter fiscal policy would counteract some of the upward pressure on interest rates and the pound. The link between all three of these key economic problems should now be clear. If the next Government dramatically reduced the deficit immediately after the general election it could quickly subside inflation, reassure the Bank of England, avert a sharp increase in interest rates and avoid an further damaging appreciation of the pound.

Until recently, such a happy sequence of events seemed inconceivable. Both parties, I assumed, would be so bound up by electoral promises that any increase

arrive at the figure of £580 million. Is it a guessimate or do the companies actually tot up the fraudulent claims they have paid?

Yours faithfully, E.J. SMITH, 14 The Fairway, Camberley, Surrey.

Wisdom lacking among those who sold utilities to aliens

From Mrs Joan Woolard. Sir, Further to reports of GKN's \$400 million suit relating to its American subsidiary, Metekco, what protection is available to the British customers and shareholders of privatised British utilities with financial strings in the United States? In the event of a similar suit being brought against an American subsidiary or owner of a British utility, who will pay? Will British customers have services cut off due to some financial embarrassment on the other side of the Atlantic?

There is also the possibility of litigation against HM ministers at some future date, or HMG generally, by an American litigant or class action suit arising from mistakes made abroad but originating in Whitehall.

It is probably too late to consider the wisdom of American regulation forbidding the sale of American utilities to aliens. Would that our "wise men" had so much foresight. Yours faithfully, JOAN WOOLARD, 35 Eastgate, Fleet Harrogate, Lincolnshire.

No sympathy for same old Lloyd's

From Sir Guy Millard. Sir, You reported on December 19 that Lloyd's of London is going to court to recover outstanding funds from non-paying names. The case would perhaps be more deserving if Lloyd's had fulfilled its own obligations. Lloyd's has so far failed to pay out so-called Finality Surpluses owed to large numbers of names, perhaps thousands, under the terms of the settlement offer. These were due, at the very latest, at the beginning of December. No word of explanation has been offered for the delay, and the authorities at Lloyd's apparently do not think that it matters. Now the names have done what was required of them by voting for the reconstruction of Lloyd's and Equitas, it seems that Lloyd's no longer cares about them. It looks as though the new Lloyd's is going to be just like the old, only perhaps more so. Yours faithfully, GUY MILLARD, Fyfield Manor, Southrop, Gloucestershire.

The payment of fraudulent insurance claims

From E.J. Smith. Sir, Mr Piero Chiodo tells us (Business Letters, December 25) that in the year before last fraudulent insurance claims totalled some £580 million. He goes on to say that, as a result, honest policyholders are paying extra premium. There is what seems an interesting paradox here: if the claims can be identified, as the total figure suggests, then why are they paid, being fraudulent, at the expense of innocent policyholders?

It would be really interesting to know how the insurers

Inflexibility surrounding the Halifax Building Society flotation

From Mr Colin Dennison. Sir, Pennington comments (December 17) on Halifax's "revolving door" solution to members wanting cash up-front. If Halifax listen to you, it will be remarkable I could not even get them to take on board my wish to relinquish my entitlement to shares in favour of my wife.

Several times I have explained to them that where a wife is younger and in better health, it makes more sense for long-term assets such as shares to continue in the name of the one with better expectation of life. All the Halifax would do in response was to refuse the facility, reciting what was obvious already, that the shares would be marketable and could be sold/given in stock exchange trading. Not really good for small quantities.

If Halifax do accept your suggestion, I will have one more go with mine. Yours sincerely, COLIN DENNISON, 38 Sheuchan View, Stranraer. From Mr R.H. Myddelton. Sir, You report (December 20) that the Halifax has been refused permission by the Building Societies Commission to send its nine million investors

Opt for the dollar

From D. Pool. Sir, Your article "Euro will cost banks \$70n a year" (December 16) is very revealing. Let us have many more items of a similar nature to prepare us for the referendum that begins to seem more and more certain on the subject of the common currency. First of all, the article says the banks will

lose large amounts of revenue because they will no longer be able to charge the public and business for the countless currency transactions that occur every day.

To my mind, on that score the euro cannot come soon enough. After all, going back to basics as Mr Major would have us do, the role of the banks should surely be to facilitate currency transactions, not make a bomb out of them. What the banks lose, the public and business will gain.

The article says that the cost to the EU of converting machinery and systems will nullify six years worth of cost savings. So there will be six years of opportunities for the software and computer industry then. After that everyone in the EU will gain by the increased business efficiency

and will go on gaining for ever more. I would go further than saying let us get on with converting to the common currency for Europe as quickly as possible. I would say let us have a world currency in the near future — the dollar. Do I hear screams from the City? Yours faithfully, D. POOL, 16 Hordle Street, Harwich, Essex.

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Dumping the Coliseum: would English National Opera be right to quit its famous home?



■ CONCERT 1
Anthony Payne's *A Sea Change* is one of the featured works in the Brunel Ensemble's London recital

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■ CONCERT 2
The Carmina Quartet bring their rare yet elusive musicianship to three Beethoven string quartets



■ TOMORROW
Hot tickets: *Times* critics look ahead to what's coming up in film, theatre, music, dance and visual art

ENO decides on a change of scene

Less than five years after securing its future at the Coliseum, English National Opera is to sell up and move. Richard Morrison discovers why

The decision was not unexpected, but it will be no less disappointing to English National Opera's loyal patrons for that. Yesterday ENO announced that it is planning to quit the London Coliseum, its home for the past 29 years, and build a new opera house. Eight possible sites have been named, none of them in the West End.

ENO would ideally like the new theatre to have two auditoriums, seating about 2,100 and 900 people respectively. It will submit a lottery application to cover the bulk of the cost, estimated at between £80 million and £120 million, and hold an architectural competition to decide the design. If the scheme progresses without any of the hitches traditionally associated with opera house building projects, the company could be inaugurating its new home as early as September 2001.

Dance companies — large and small, British and foreign — would be invited to share the new performing facilities with the opera company. Indeed, the larger auditorium would be designed with the dual purpose of providing London belatedly with a house for large-scale dance.

Meanwhile, the 93-year-old Coliseum, bought for £12 million from Stoll Moss Theatres to house ENO less than five years ago, would be sold to the private sector again, and probably become the prime West End venue for long-running musicals. Several commercial managers have apparently already indicated to ENO that they would be interested in acquiring Frank

Mitcham's grandest theatre. ENO's board inside its decision to abandon the Coliseum after studying a 300-page "feasibility study", itself funded by the lottery, by a group of management and theatre consultants, architects and market researchers. "At the outset, the board members believed that we should remain in the Coliseum," says John Baker, ENO's chairman. "But the logic of moving to a new theatre is compelling."

6 To make the place work, 560 people bang their heads against a brick wall

So what is that logic? The limitations of the Coliseum as the home of an opera company have long been apparent. It was never designed as a theatre that could juggle up to four different productions in repertoire at the same time. It has virtually no storage areas backstage for sets, and its Edwardian hydraulics rely heavily on teams of well-muscular stagehands working in shifts round the clock.

"This is the hardest-working theatre in the country, which is one reason why it is falling apart," says Dennis Marks, ENO's general director. "To make the place work as an

opera house 560 people have to bang their heads against a brick wall for 300 days a year. They do make it work: the feat of staging *Die Soldaten* this season showed that. But there comes a point when the feeling of permanent stridulation exceeds the rewards."

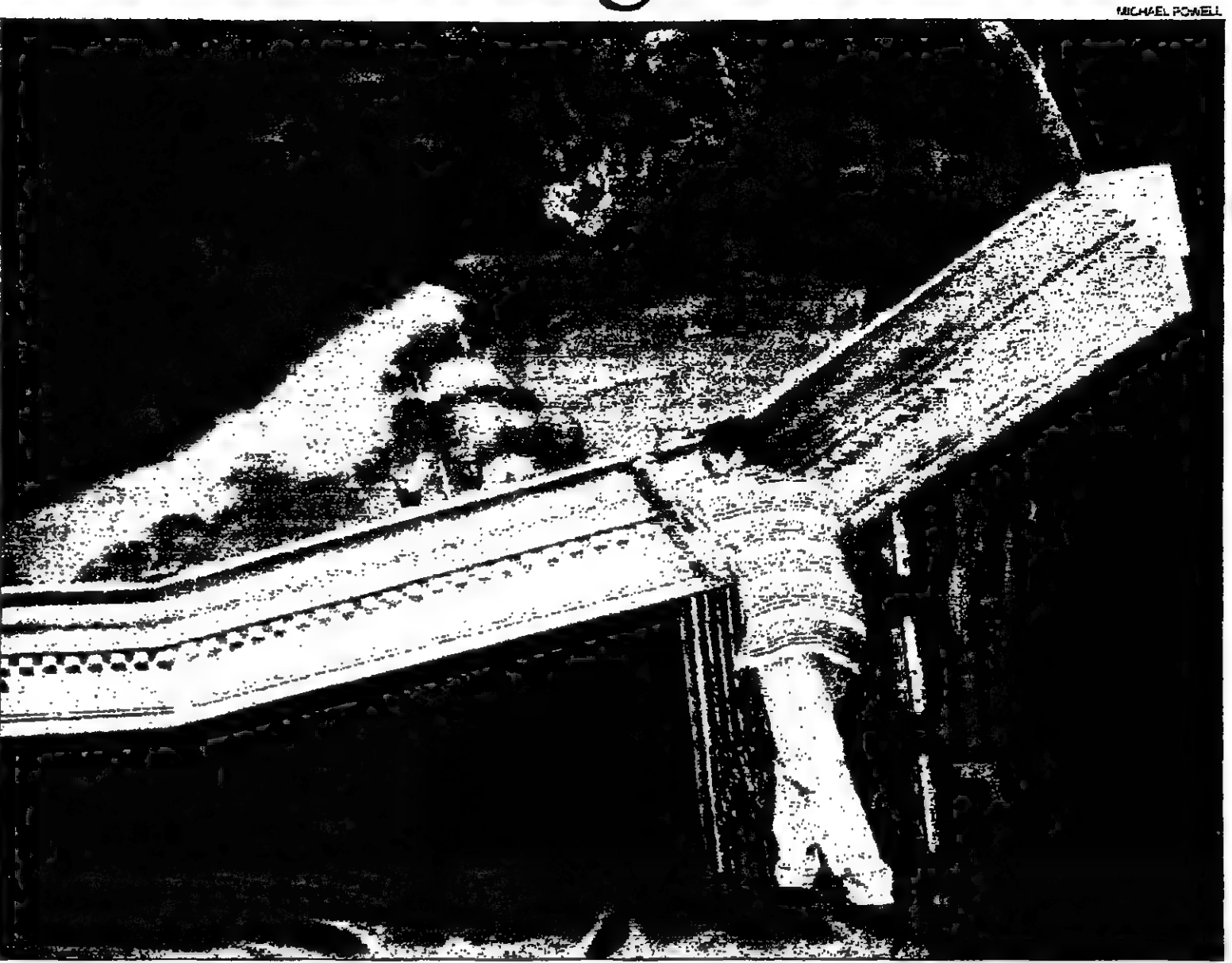
Unlike the Royal Opera House, however, the Coliseum cannot be redeveloped on its adjacent land: it is locked in by roads, alleys and surrounding buildings. So there is no chance of building what most big modern opera houses have: parallel stages for rehearsal and for storage of sets. Nor can it expand downwards: an underground stream already supplies more than enough winter floods.

Nevertheless, after ENO acquired the Coliseum freehold in 1992 it did commission the architect Sheppard Robson to devise a redevelopment. This would have provided greatly improved foyers and other front-of-house facilities, and done something to modernise the stage and meet essential health-and-safety requirements. On this basis, ENO drafted a lottery bid.

"It was a very ingenious scheme," Marks says. "But at the end of the day the company was still spread over six separate sites across London. It still didn't have an in-house rehearsal stage. It was still tied to 650 scenery shifts by hand each year. And the estimate for all this was around £30 million, plus perhaps £20 million to cover relocation costs during two years of rebuilding. I did not feel we could justify a lottery bid on this basis. We decided we had to commission a comparative study."

Cynics will find it unsurprising that the resulting feasibility study supports Marks's preference for a new opera house. But the report also notes that, although London has many huge lottery-funded redevelopments under way, there is no big new building commissioned. "I find it extraordinary that London is approaching the millennium without a single completely new architectural project," Marks says.

However, the report is less enthusiastic about ENO's idea of having a new opera house with an additional smaller auditorium attached. It points out that "the option that reduces risk to ENO, costs less money and raises the least number of managerial issues for ENO is the single auditorium solution". The report sug-



The limitations of the Coliseum have long been apparent... its Edwardian hydraulics rely heavily on teams of stagehands working round the clock

gests that ENO put its small-scale and contemporary work "at another venue, in all probability Sadler's Wells", pointing out that "it provides good business for another Arts Council lottery client, and makes good sense in terms of cost-effective use of lyric theatre facilities".

But what about the risk of taking ENO out of the West End? St Martin's Lane buzzes every night, as the crowds flood out of theatres, cafés, restaurants and cinemas. It is hard to imagine ENO enjoying this kind of atmosphere in Vauxhall, or somewhere "north of St Pancras".

Marks talks grandly of how a new cultural institution can "lead an urban regeneration, just as the Lincoln Centre did in New York's Upper West Side, or the Sydney Opera House did in a rundown harbour area". But there must be a risk that the urban regeneration simply won't happen, leaving ENO stranded in an area that obstinately

retains a woefully unlyrical ambience.

Today, however, ENO's patrons may be puzzling over a different question: why did ENO eagerly accept the freehold of the Coliseum in 1992 — and with it the perpetually draining obligation to secure and improve the fabric of the

theatre, front and back of house? — if the old place was so unsuited to its needs? Marks (who had not joined ENO in 1992) points out that "first, the lease was going to run out in 1997, so the freehold had to be bought to secure ENO's future; and second, there was no lottery in 1992, so

there was no point even in thinking about a new theatre." He compares ENO's current resolve to move to new premises with the National Theatre's determination in the 1960s. "The Old Vic is much loved, just as the Coliseum is, but it was never going to accommodate the kind of Nat-

ional Theatre that people wanted to create," Marks says. "With Paul Daniel coming as our music director, ENO will be ever more committed to developing singers, audiences and repertoire of the future. I don't think this vision is best served by a palace of varieties that is almost a century old."

ENGLISH National Opera has named eight possible "central London" locations that might be suitable for its new opera house. They are:

- Hungerford Car Park/Jubilee Gardens, South Bank
- Coin Street, South Bank
- New Riverhead, Rosebery Avenue, Islington
- King's Cross redevelopment area
- North of new British Library, St Pancras
- Potters Field, Southwark
- St Christopher's House, Bankside
- Ebbw site, Vauxhall

The company will not reveal which are its preferred sites. "There are some very delicate negotiations going on with a number of sites, involving the owners, the local authorities and government departments, and these are best not conducted in public," Marks says.

It expects to choose a site and an architect within the next 12 months. A lottery application would then be lodged during 1998. Building work would take two years, meaning that ENO would remain at the Coliseum until at least 2001.

LONDON RECITALS: Youthful exuberance in new music and Beethoven

Class of '97 looks to the future

TWO things combine to make the Park Lane Group's New Year series of Young Artists Concerts something special. The first is the exceptionally high level of accomplishment displayed by each annual crop of young performers, carefully auditioned and groomed as they are. The second is the unflagging commitment to music of our time.

This year's featured composer is Anthony Payne, and although lack of funds regrettably prevented the usual PLG commission, three past commissions (including one from Payne) are to be heard again this year, and there will be 15 premieres, including five new works composed for the series.

The opening concert by the

Brunel Ensemble on Sunday, optimised the twin virtues of the series. Not only is the Ensemble, founded in 1992, packed with fine musicians, but their enthusiasm for challenging contemporary music shines through.

The programme began with Julian Anderson's *Khorovod* in a performance of barbaric exuberance — suitably enough, since the Russian folk dances invoked are in themselves unashamedly earthy. The players were kept on their toes — not least the two percussionists who displayed nimble footwork — and Christopher Austin's direction, main-

tened the momentum well. Anthony Payne's *A Sea Change* provided contrast, with its delicate filigree textures, drawing sensitive playing from a reduced ensemble, in particular flute and clarinet. Precision of ensemble and tuning were tested both here and in Elisabeth Lutyens's *Six Bagatelles*, where the often spare quality of the writing draws attention to such matters. The Brunel passed the test with flying colours.

A new work by Morgan Hayes, titled *Viscid*, aptly conjured textures that were syrupy yet with the potential to evolve. The piece builds

effectively to a menacing climax before its unpredictable quiet end. The Ensemble was as impressive here as in Richard Rodney Bennett's *Book of Hours*, though the more conventional idiom of the latter once or twice highlighted imperceptible innovation.

With the short fantasy drawn by John Woolrich from his 1996 chamber opera *In the House of Crossed Desires*, the return was made to the sphere of the grotesque, with chiming clocks, crashing pots and pans, braying clarinets and growling tuba. Conductor and ensemble entered fully into the spirit of the piece.

BARRY MILLINGTON

WHILE the quartet worthies of this world make their dutiful journeys through Beethoven and lay down their successive cycles on disc for posterity, the bright-eyed among their colleagues (and they do not come much more twinkling than the Carmina Quartet) choose other ways. This Swiss quartet elected to share Beethoven's 17 string quartets with five equally distinctive ensembles, including the Leipzig and the Hagen, in a series of six programmes at the Wigmore Hall.

The Keller Quartet (tomorrow) and the Quatuor Mosquies (February 2) have yet to be savoured. On Saturday it was the turn of the masterminders of the series themselves. Of all these ensembles, the Carmina is perhaps the hardest to define. Its quality of rare yet elusive musicianship is its greatest joy. And nowhere more so than in three works which show Beethoven, too, at his most ambiguous.

The Carmina chose, one early, one middle, one late quartet — each with a puzzling heart. For the Op 18 No 3, the

The puzzle solvers
Carmina Quartet
Wigmore Hall

first Beethoven ever wrote, the players teased out the enigmas posed by the little opening sigh, as it metamorphoses throughout the first movement. Their way was to play with a quietness and closeness of ensemble, with minimum vibrato and short, neat chording, which drew the listener in more deeply than any more highly charged playing could have done. By the finale it had lifted off into a true Presto so technically ballasted that it had no fear of the most dizzying of flights.

Unease was more acute in the biting discord which began the C major *Rosamovsky Quartet*. The Carmina, with its fine sense of timing, kept its audience as tense with expectation as if it had never heard the work before. The slow movement was no less special. Led by Matthias Enderle's dark, resinous first violin, the players seemed transformed into ghostly figures caught in an unending and timeless round dance, to the numb pizzicato pulse of Stephan Goerner's cello.

The Quartet in A minor, Op 132, seemed to sum up all that had gone before. The Carmina's best attributes — its supple democracy of ensemble, its incisiveness, and a blending of voices subtle enough for Renaissance polyphony — all fused to recreate Beethoven's great *Heiliger Dankgesang*, a "Sacred song of thanks from a convalescent to the Godhead" in which one member of the audience at least could share.

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Michael Flatley returns to London with *Lord of the Dance*

VENUE: Tonight at Wembley Arena

THE TIMES ARTS



CHOICE 3

The Cliff Richard musical juggernaut *Heathcliff* hits Manchester

VENUE: Tonight at the Palace Theatre



MUSIC

The great Spanish tenor Alfredo Kraus lends his voice to a singing competition in the Canary Islands

LONDON

THE CRIPPLE OF INISHMAAN Nicholas Hytner directs the second play by award-winning author Martin McDonagh. Rudest of the Cripple of Inishmaan, a 19th-century story of a man who dreams of stardom in Hollywood director Robert Flaherty's latest film. (Cottesloe Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-482 2252) Opens tonight, 7pm

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST The North London Cottesloe Theatre Company presents a sparkling comedy of manners. (Cottesloe Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-482 2252) Opens tonight, 7pm

LORD OF THE DANCE Michael Flatley returns to London with his Celtic dance troupe. (Wembley Arena, Wembley, Middx) (0181-900 1234) Tonight, 8pm

SHOWBOAT Dan Rieff's comedy based on the working life of a showboat. (Cottesloe Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-482 2252) Opens tonight, 7pm

ART

ART Albert Frey, Tom Courtenay and Peter Hill in an extraordinary new play. (Cottesloe Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-482 2252) Opens tonight, 7pm

BLOOD AND ICE Revival of the play by John L. Pendergast. (Cottesloe Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-482 2252) Opens tonight, 7pm

DICK DAREDEVIL A play by John L. Pendergast. (Cottesloe Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-482 2252) Opens tonight, 7pm

DOLL'S HOUSE A play by John L. Pendergast. (Cottesloe Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-482 2252) Opens tonight, 7pm

MARRY ME A LITTLE A play by John L. Pendergast. (Cottesloe Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-482 2252) Opens tonight, 7pm

NEW RELEASES

SHINE (12) Child prodigy pianist competes under the strain. (Cottesloe Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-482 2252) Opens tonight, 7pm

SLIPPERIES (15) A comedy about a school. (Cottesloe Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-482 2252) Opens tonight, 7pm

THE CRIPPLE OF INISHMAAN (15) A play by Nicholas Hytner. (Cottesloe Theatre, South Bank, SE1) (0171-482 2252) Opens tonight, 7pm

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TODAY'S CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Gillian Massey

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CHOICE 2

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MUSIC: Alfredo Kraus joins winners of the prize named after him; plus a compact *Traviata*

Giving Canaries a voice

In Las Palmas, not far from the Perez Galdos Theatre, built in the early years of the century, a blue plaque marks the birthplace of Alfredo Kraus. For 30 years the great Spanish tenor has been the most famous citizen of the Canary Islands, and their leading musical export. Since 1990 he has been president of the jury in the biennial singing competition in the Perez Galdos. Recently, for the first time, he gave it his voice as well as his name.

The competitors were lured not only by two first prizes of £7,500 each but also by the possibility of singing operatic duets with Kraus at a gala with the Filarmónica de Gran Canaria. It makes a change from the masterclasses which usually follow such events. And, with television cameras in attendance, the publicity value was obvious. The success of the Cardiff Singer of the World competition has shown that exposure to a wide audience is what makes the agents come running with contracts.

The jury might well have been looking for a lyric tenor to carry on the Kraus tradition. If so, they were disappointed. The two finalists in this category, both Koreans, picked up no prizes. In a remarkable show of unanimity, the jury, audience and a handful of attendant critics all gave their vote to Felipe Bou, a bass brought up in Brazil and now working in Spain.

This did cause a problem: suitable operatic duets for tenor and bass are very thin on the ground. So instead Bou got a solo spot and proved, with *Il lacerato spirito* from *Simon Boccanegra*, that he is a Verdian of potential. Two days earlier he had belted out his rivals with more Verdi, *Elia giannina* from *Don Carlo*, sung at the jury's special request.

To take on, at the age of 28, two such troubled, elderly gentlemen as Fiesco and Philip II of Spain shows considerable maturity. But Bou is already a veteran of several operatic competitions and it showed in his composure on stage and his handling of words. His real quality stems from the evenness of his tone and an effortless lower register.

OPERA in its full glory may be hideously expensive to mount, but over the past decade Travelling Opera has shown that, by choosing wisely, it is possible to put on a creditable imitation of the original at a fraction of the cost. Verdi's *Aida*, with its massed ranks of soldiers and slaves, might tax the ingenuity even of Travelling Opera's founder-director, Peter Knapp, but the same composer's *La traviata*, intimate and chamber-like in conception, does remarkably little when done by such reduced forces (13 singers and 11 instrumentalists).

As for the score, many of the characteristic sonories are retained in Richard Bar-



Helping hand: the great Spanish tenor Alfredo Kraus has lent his name to a prize for young opera singers

combe's arrangement, dominated by woodwind and strings. Knapp's travelling production of 1994, designed by Venetia Davan Weston, staged by the band alone to occupy the platform with the singers, the rapport was excellent. The standard of playing was also very high, and Alex Ingram's direction was clean and precise, with just enough flexibility to register fluctuating emotions.

Vocally it is a good company show, with little danger of any principal being eclipsed by star quality elsewhere.

La traviata

Barbican

Penelope Shaw tackles the formidable title role with commendable composure and a fair sense of style. On the opening night a palpable tightness combined with over-generous vibrato tended to deprive her phrases of natural shaping, but the role is surely within her grasp. Opposite her, Bjorn Arvidsson's Alfredo injects passion into the part, even though his tone is somewhat undernourished. More-

over, he cuts a sympathetic figure. I particularly liked the way his reluctance to propose the toast at the beginning was clearly the result of shyness - no false modesty here.

His father, Germont, is played by Glenville Harcourt, a dignified and authoritative actor who does not exclude sympathy. His dramatic entry towards the end of Act II to denounce his son's conduct capitalised on his noble bearing and was accompanied by an effective lighting change (Paul J. Need) to an icy blue that froze the other characters on the spot.

Faultless technique plus the meticulous selection of a small number of roles and the careful rationing of his appearances are the reasons why Kraus is still in prime voice at an age when most singers are content with character parts. Kraus, who made his operatic debut exactly 40 years ago, has never accepted a supporting part. He is due to appear in concert with the Royal Opera in 1998. Watch for further announcements.

JOHN HIGGINS

Among remaining roles, Andrew Dale Porter's Marchese D'Obigny is particularly worthy of mention, while Flora is satisfactorily taken by Lynne McAdam and Baron Ochs by James Mack. Julian, Schumann plays Anthonia and Graham Case the Doctor, doubling as a chorus member to bolster the number of guests at Flora's party.

Knapp's production, as befits the work, is not one of his rarer efforts. Indeed, it is inclined to be understated and is unlikely to alienate the good people of Cheltenham and Basingstoke as it sets off in its nationwide tour.

BARRY MILLINGTON

OPERA & BALLET

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THEATRES

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THE CRIPPLE OF INISHMAAN Nicholas Hytner directs the second play by award-winning author

■ VISUAL ART 1

London sees the fruits of a new chapter in Anselm Kiefer's tortured exploration of German history

■ VISUAL ART 2

The photographer Charles Hoff's fascination with prize fighting is showcased in a new London show

THE TIMES
ARTS

■ VISUAL ART 3

How ArtSway, a small but important centre, is bringing new art to an unlikely setting in the New Forest

■ CD CHOICE

Georg Solti comes out on top in our survey of Humperdinck's fairytale opera *Hansel and Gretel*

VISUAL ART: Rebirth of a great German painter; bringing art to a rural area; plus the galleries round-up

Ploughing a new furrow

Five years ago Anselm Kiefer stopped painting. Richard Cork welcomes his confident return

Towards the end of 1991, Anselm Kiefer suddenly stopped making art. It seemed an astonishing decision for an energetic man who had produced so much powerful work over the previous two decades. At the same time, he left his native Germany and settled in the South of France. The move fuelled an anxious suspicion that Kiefer, whose art had been obsessed with his country's tragic history, was abandoning his principal source of inspiration.

Since he did not resume work for more than three years, the concern grew more acute. But now that Kiefer has started painting again, often on surfaces as monumental as before, his long period of abstinence appears less alarming. Confidently occupying the grandeur of the South London Gallery as well as large rooms at Anthony d'Offay's, the recent work adds up to a rebirth. These towering images suggest that Kiefer underwent a self-imposed exorcism, struggling to free himself from the traumas of the past in order to begin all over again.

Not that the new, purged artist is unrecognisable. The furrowed fields that played such a central role in former paintings reappear here, most notably in some titanic exhibits at the South London Gallery. But they are very different, in mood and composition alike, from the blackened, scorched, smoking earth he depicted before. Kiefer's earlier fields were arenas of wholesale devastation. They came to be seen

as symbols of Germany itself, still suffering from the annihilation and shame of the Nazi era. In the new images, though, fields are confined to the lower part of the canvas. Purer and more parched than their mixed forerunners, they are made subservient in every case to colossal areas of sky. The sense of release is palpable.

He can now regard the land as a haven for growth?

ble our eyes, liberated from terra firma, are allowed at last to wander across the immensity of space. And although the sky initially seems to be invaded by swarms of insects, the dark specks turn out to be real sunflower seeds glued to the picture surface. Whether floating upwards or descending like manna from the cosmos, they show that Kiefer is now permitting himself to regard the land as a haven for fresh growth and hope.

He also gives himself a prominent place in this awakening. Nearly 30 years ago, when Kiefer produced a disquieting series of self-portrait photographs, he wore a Nazi uniform and gave the *Hell* Hitler salute to mark the vicious occupation of prized locations across Europe. To

day, however, this guilty identification with the murderous lust for war has been replaced by a healing alternative. Instead of ironically glorifying in aggression, Kiefer represents himself as a semi-naked figure lying in a field of outstretched sunflowers. With bare arms placed calmly at his sides and legs together, he adopts the pose known in yoga as the *stavesana*. The uninhabited countryside and equally desolate hills in Kiefer's previous work have given way, here, to a more nurturing region where humanity can once again become visible.

However, there is nothing triumphant about this radically altered vision. Kiefer left Germany in the year of reunification, a momentous event that must have made him realise that his harrowing preoccupation with war was over. But the widespread elation that accompanied the dismantling of the Berlin Wall cannot be detected in his new paintings. Their optimism is qualified and hard-won. Compared with Van Gogh's sunflowers, emanating the heat of a Provencal summer, Kiefer's look ominously black.

So despite Kiefer's passionate belief in the prospect of renewal, he cannot escape from the past. Fresh life only seems possible if it springs from a sacrificial source. The man in a yonic trance appears to be offering himself, defensively, to the sunflowers. Near by, in a book filled with pages where oil and



Kiefer's *Ich hatte alle Indien in meiner Hand*, inspired by a 17th-century sonnet: "In the chilled sobriety of winter, global harmony is achieved"

emulsion have been applied to photo-collages sprinkled with ash, grass and wild plants grow over the remains of obliterated cities. Kiefer's involvement with the subject stems from his awareness that bombed German cities after the Second World War often ended up covered with natural growth.

A tough-minded duality lies at the centre of Kiefer's vision. It means that his new work, for all its emergent sense of promise, never lapses into wishful thinking. The sunflower seeds can still be seen

as a cloud of locusts. Without retaining a suggestion of their baleful presence, he finds a positive future impossible to imagine.

In some pictures, the corpse-like mediator is replaced by a vertical man. According to the title of one tall, narrow image, this balding and wispy bearded figure is Robert Fludd, the 16th-century physician and mystic philosopher best known for his influential *History of Both Worlds*. Unlike the tattered man lying amid the sunflowers, he is naked. And the connection

with Fludd indicates that Kiefer is exploring ideas about the microcosm of the individual nourished by the macrocosm of the universe.

Even here, though, at the height of his striving for an interconnected wholeness, he stops well short of bliss. Fludd, who can also be seen as a self-portrait of the artist, looks haggard as he hangs upside down among the drooping flowers. He appears to have risen from the earth with difficulty, and when the same male nude is placed the right way up among the continents

of the world he looks no less gaunt than before.

This time, the image takes its name from a line by the 17th-century Spanish poet Francisco de Quevedo. In his lyrical sonnet, *Portrait of Lisi which was Brought in a Ring*, the writer finds himself entranced by the burnished miniature and concludes ecstatically that "I hold all Indias in my hand". None of the shining, seductive colours in Quevedo's enchanting ring can be found in Kiefer's dour picture. Restricted to umber, sepia and pale grey, it has the

chilled sobriety of winter. But the lines dangling like loose reins from the man's hands eventually curl upwards, embracing all the land masses. Global harmony is achieved, even if the figure's haunted eyes still belong to someone who once stared straight into the heart of darkness.

Anselm Kiefer is at the South London Gallery (0171-803 0130) until Feb 9, and at Anthony d'Offay (0171-490 4100) until Feb 15. Richard Cork will chair a public discussion on Kiefer at the South London Gallery on Jan 15 at 6.30pm.

Cranking up the old Morris in the New Forest

Linda Blair on an arts centre which hopes to unite artists and community



Furniture by Rick Lawlor at ArtSway

SOMETHING new in art is stirring in the New Forest — that immensely desirable haven of ancient peace, trees and wild ponies. Despite the beauty of the area and the unsurprising number of professional artists who have always been drawn to it, until now there has been no local resource for art with a capital A. No gallery, study centre, academy. And out just in the immediate area, a 16,000 sq ft building, rising from the landscape between Portsmouth and Reading. Though artists continue to find landscape subjects inspirational, arts centres tend to be confined to inner-city areas.

But now here is ArtSway, a small but significant centre for contemporary visual arts in the

village of Sway. Here up-and-coming young professional artists will be able to bounce ideas off their peers, rent studios, exhibit and sell their work, and involve the local community in workshops. William Morris would have approved.

At the centre of the project is the converted stable block of Whitbread's 1890s Forest Heath Hotel. To this has been added a new top-floor exhibition gallery, a landscaped sculpture garden, and a studio block, with all the building design work handled by the architect Tony Fretton.

As its director Linda Fredericks points out, ArtSway is very much a modern response to the current cultural, social and economic climate. All its usable space is

multipurpose, and wired up with subfloor ISDN lines, so it can display multimedia exhibits as well as conventional artwork.

An essential part of ArtSway's function as a resource for artists will also be to create a dialogue with everyone else. Fredericks says: "Artists are part of the community, but over the years they've come to be seen as separate. Now we want to put them back together. Not as teachers, but as the expressors of ideas they absorb from everyone and that everyone can appreciate."

The project started five years ago as the brainchild of a small group of artists, with Fredericks (an artist and resident herself) as the prime mover. Now it is a registered charity, a "partnership" between the artists and Southern Arts, Hampshire CC and New Forest DC. Last year it took off via an Arts Council lottery grant of £306,000, and additional funding from the Foundation for Sport and the Arts (£80,000) and the New Forest DC (£60,000).

Whitbread chipped in by leasing the old coach house and the

land for the extension at a peppercorn rent. But while Whitbread adds lustre to its corporate image, the immediate community is hoping for more direct benefits, such as helping village shops to compete with the supermarkets; the doctor's surgery manager hopes to be able to use some of the workshops for "art therapy".

In any case ArtSway will have to generate its own income through rents on studio space, commission on sales, art workshops and conferences "not necessarily on art subjects". But there will be no admission charges for exhibitions nor, Fredericks insists, will ArtSway turn itself into yet another New Forest souvenir shop.

Fredericks is aware of the difficulty of keeping ArtSway simultaneously "accessible" and at the leading edge of art practice. Expressing this symbiosis, the opening exhibition, *Marking Presence*, from January 31, will be of drawings by well established artists (including Deanna Pefferbridge, Bill Woodrow and Alison Wilding) plus a video projection of local people telling their own stories — by artist-in-residence Julie Myers.

ArtSway should succeed in pioneering an entirely new type of showcase for younger professional artists in rural areas. Its larger aim of creating an exchange of ideas with the surrounding community will be harder to achieve.

A guide to the best available recordings presented in conjunction with Radio 3

HANSEL AND GRETEL
Reviewed by Rodney Milnes
HUMPERDINCK'S fairytale opera is conceived orchestrally on a Wagnerian scale, so in terms of a recording you need to hear everything that's going on in the score. For that reason historic versions in mono have to be discarded from the nine currently available.

Among the early stereo sets, the EMI recording under André Cluytens boasts fine playing from the Vienna Philharmonic, and the RCA version under Kurt Eichhorn has perhaps the best Gretel of all in Helen Donath. But there are also drawbacks in both casts. John Pritchard's recording on CBS is disappointingly ill-balanced but has a mesmerising Witch in Elisabeth Söderström.

The most recent version (1992) is conducted by Donald Runnicles on Teldec and his Witch, Hanna Schwarz, is also outstanding. He also has a lovely Gretel in Ruth Ziesak, but strident parents and a sonorous but faceless Hansel. Jeffrey Tate's fine recording on EMI is compromised by a



dull Witch but has good children and equally good parents. The version under Georg Solti (DECCA 421 111-2, 2-CD, £29.99) has marvellous playing by the Vienna Philharmonic, Lucia Popp and Brigitte Fassbaender as the children; and a matchless Sandman from Norma Burrowes. The Philips set under Colin Davis (1992) with the Dresden Staatskapelle is outstanding: their playing is slick and fine-tuned. The cast — Edita Gruberova, Ann Murray, Gwyneth Jones, Franz Grundheber and Christa Ludwig — is hard to beat. If settle for Solti on Decca, it is because conductor, cast and orchestra are fully engaged in the drama, whereas Davis can sound slightly detached.

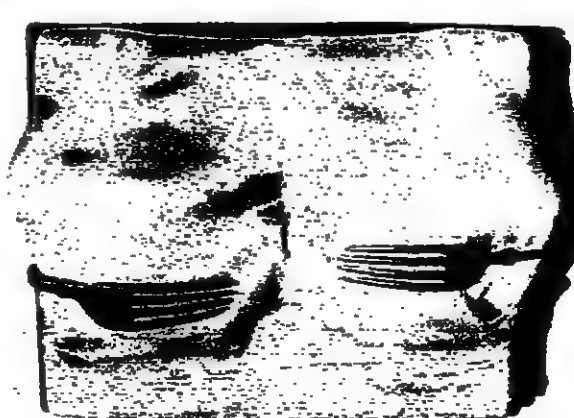
To order the recommended recording, with free delivery, please send a cheque payable to The Times Music Shop, FREEPOST, SCO681, Forres, IV36 0BR or phone 0945 023 466; e-mail: music@the-times.co.uk. Next Saturday on Radio 3 (9am): Ravel's *Mirrors*

ANYONE who supposes that "contemporary artists' books" are likely to be, well, books as we normally know them is in for a shock at Speck Studios. The title of the exhibition is *By Its Cover*, and indeed one should be very wary of judging any of these books by its cover — even supposing that you could safely distinguish the cover and work out how to open or close it. You might, for example, find that Patricia Collins's *Breakfast Book* turns out, disappointingly, to contain a bacon and egg on toast, and even the sauce bottle to go with it. Matt's *Brainwaves from JJ*, in the proper Surrealist fashion, cradles a bra with two forks. Not all the artists are quite so civilised. Some do John Latham-ish things with books cut up, burnt and otherwise destroyed before being reconstructed in quasi-sculptural form. The last thing you could do here is actually read anything. But after all, the world is full of libraries.

Speck Studios, 17 Rylston Road, SW6 (0171-386 0095) Tues-Fri 10am-6pm, Sat 11am-3pm, until Friday.

IT IS tempting to compare the photographer Charles Hoff to the painter Sam Rabin. Both have concentrated to an extraordinary degree in their work on the prize fight. And both seem to be less interested in the human drama of the fight game than in its formal qualities. Hoff's primary concern at the outset must have been reportage,

ABOUT THE LONDON GALLERIES



The properly Surreal *Brainwave from JJ* by Mali

capturing the climactic moments, the agony and the ecstasy. But news value seems rapidly to have been replaced by an almost sculptural sense of the relationship of one massive form to another. An element of heroic exaggeration is perhaps almost inevitable in any picture taken from floor-level looking up. And yet these boxes appear more often painfully vulnerable than heroically heroic.

SPECIAL PHOTOGRAPHERS COMPANY, 21 Kensington Park Road, W11 (0171-221 3489), Mon-Fri 10am-6pm, Sat 11am-5pm, until Jan 18.

FACED even a very few years ago with the prospect of a show by six Polish sculptors from the Gdansk Academy of Fine Arts, one would have

known just what to expect. Now, with all of Western art opened like an oyster to artists of the former Eastern bloc, it is impossible even to guess. In the event, the sculptors of the Gdansk Group, showing at the Polish Cultural Institute as an early contribution to next year's celebration of the Gdansk millennium, prove to go off very much each in his or her own direction. Stanislaw Radwanski, the teacher and leader of the group, is the most consciously virtuosic, proving that he can carve marble or cast bronze as well as any modern master. Among the younger members, Mariusz Bialecki comes up with a particularly beguiling idea for his *Self Portrait*, carving it very approximately in wood, and then marking out the

features in pencil. Dabrowka Tyndevica makes the most ceramic bas-reliefs of mountain formations are intensely memorable. Polish Cultural Institute, 34 Portland Place, W1 (0171-636 6032), Mon-Fri 10am-6pm (Thurs to 5pm), until Jan 20.

THIS year again Chris Beetles is offering his regular holiday season *bonne bouche* of *The Illustrators*, representing British illustration from 1780 to date. As usual the main weight of the show, which features some 500 items, falls in the late Victorian and early modern era, the so-called heyday of the giftbook and coloured illustration à la Arthur Rackham and Heath Robinson. There is enough of both these artists to satisfy the most demanding collector. But Beetles is also very skilled at rooting out lesser-known artists of comparable interest and skill: Helen Jacobs's image of Ariel on a bar's back is quite worthy of Rackham, and William M. Tiffin's *The Treasure Ships* is in tune with Masfeliand romance. If your taste goes to recent cartoonist/illustrators like Giles or Larry or Quentin Blake, those requirements too can be satisfied. And the catalogue is, as ever, a Christmas gift in itself. Chris Beetles, 8 & 10 Ryder Street, SW1 (0171-839 7551), Mon-Sat 10am-5.30pm, until Jan 25.

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The ancient finders-keepers principle is being lost. Gary Slapper reports



Whose treasure now?

They may not realise it, but children who gleefully and defiantly dig for treasure trove are chiding one of the oldest maxims of English law. Now much of the ancient regulation governing treasure trove — established by common law — has been quietly reorganised by the Treasure Act 1996 and, when it comes into force, some of the legal landscape relatively untouched since 1265 will be significantly altered.

A code of practice governing the reporting of discoveries was published in December by the Department of National Heritage, inviting comments from interested parties, and the Act will come into force this year, once Parliament approves the code.

There are about 30,000 metal detector enthusiasts in Britain, who find 400,000 items a year. The National Council of Metal Detecting says that many of its members will give up the hobby because there will no longer be any incentive.

The principle evolved before the establishment of banks was that wealth hidden from the King would revert to the Crown. Under the old law (which will still apply to items found before the Act comes into force), anything discovered that is made of a "substantial" proportion of gold or silver must be reported to the local coroner, who will hold an inquest with a jury. If the property appears to have been concealed by the original owner with a view to later recovery, and now has no known owner, it is treasure trove — it belongs to the Crown by prerogative. In practice, the items will then go to the British Museum, the National Museum of Wales or the Environment Department in

Northern Ireland, which will pay the "market value" to the finder. Valuations are carried out by the Treasure Trove Reviewing Committee.

The trouble with this, for museum curators and archaeologists, is that some splendid finds, which are not precious metal — such as the Middleham jewel, valued at £2,500,000 — are not protected as treasure trove and thus can fall into private hands. It was fortunate that the refusal of an export licence prevented that find from leaving the country.

The same lack of protection also applies to anything, even precious metal, found to have been lost rather than hidden, and to all sorts of gemstones and pottery, hidden or not. If

he treasure trove, the coroner must deliver it to the properly entitled person or, if there are rival claimants, invite them to make proceedings to determine rightful ownership. In practice, this means that a finder will often be able to sell the object to the highest bidder, which is often a private interest rather than a British museum.

One serious problem with using coroners' inquests in these cases is that the jury's verdict is not conclusive and disputes over legal rights can be litigated in the civil courts.

This is something that Ian Fletcher painfully discovered. In 1995, Mr Fletcher using a metal detector in Farnham, Surrey, discovered a medieval

the land were acts of trespass which, in any event, together with metal detecting, were not recreational pursuits permitted by the park rules.

The main purpose of the coroner's inquest into treasure trove is to preserve artefacts for their archaeological or historical interest. The procedure seems defective, however, because so many objects of historical value, such as gemstones, pottery, and cloth fall outside the current definition. And to be classified as treasure trove (and thus end up in a museum), the object needs to be something that was deliberately concealed in times past. So many objects that look as though they were simply lost or abandoned are allowed to fall into private ownership.

The new Act, replacing the old common law, covers many-made objects and is intended to extend the protection currently afforded to gold and silver objects to a wider range of archaeological finds and to remove some of the anachronisms of the existing law. When its provisions come into force, the Treasure Act will cover all hoards of coins at least 300 years old with a gold or silver content of at least 10 per cent (or less if there are more than ten coins). The Act will also apply to objects at least 300 years old with a precious metal content of at least 10 per cent, and other materials and objects found in archaeological association with the treasure.

The most important change, though, will be the absence of need to determine why objects came to be buried in the ground. They will thus have the status of treasure even if they were lost, abandoned or buried in a grave. A new

Treasure Valuation Committee will advise on *ex-gratia* payments to be made to finders. Objects not included in the new definition of treasure are termed "portable antiquities" and reporting of these will be on a voluntary basis.

The Act also says that treasure inquests shall normally be held without a jury and creates a new criminal offence of failing to report potential treasure to a coroner within 14 days of the find. Treasure seekers who fail to report a find will face three months' jail, fines of up to £5,000 or both. The Act thus largely undermines the finders-keepers principle. In theory, the museum-using public will be saved from being losing weepers in future cases of uncovered treasure.

Dr Gary Slapper is principal lecturer in law at Staffordshire University.

The prosecution of their profession

Will solicitors win rights of audience in higher courts?

The senior judges of England and Wales are now locked in debate over whether to allow solicitors employed in the Crown Prosecution Service the right to prosecute cases in the Crown Court. The decision of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, after taking account of their views, is expected in the next few weeks. The decision will mark the end of a battle that has been waged at least since the Lord Chancellor published his *Green Papers* proposing reform of the legal profession and the abolition of lawyers' monopolies, including that of the bar in the higher courts.

If the decision is in favour of limited rights for employed solicitors it will put in place the final keystone for the CPS, which has lobbied for extended advocacy rights since the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 raised the prospect.

Earlier this year, in the Appellate Court in Adelaide, a lawyer employed by South Australia's Director of Public Prosecutions, argued in that court on an interlocutory matter without any apparent difficulty. Indeed, the irony of the case, to me, was that the advocate in question was a former solicitor employed by the CPS in England. If such matters can be dealt with adequately in similar jurisdictions, what is unique about our jurisdiction, where everyone has the vapours as soon as the prospect of similar rights of audience is mentioned?

We are told that one of the problems would be a lack of objectivity and independence, the implication being that state employees are unlikely to have such qualities. This is an unattractive suggestion and one that defies logical analysis. Who is likely to be the more independent and objective — the advocate who is hired temporarily but looks, and hopes, for more work in the future and perhaps performs accordingly, or the one who is secure in his employment and perhaps, therefore, is the less concerned about the outcome? After all, the prosecutor's task is merely to present competently and fairly the facts of a matter to the jury and the court. The outcome should be — and, I suspect, nearly always is — a matter of indifference whether he be employed or self-employed.

It is said that a further reason is the issue of disclosure of evidence. Yet the past 25 years are littered with cases where inadequate disclosure has been a problem and where the prosecutor has been not an employed lawyer

but self-employed counsel. The history surrounding disclosure of evidence, therefore, seems to be as much in favour of change as a retention of the present system.

An irony of this particular debate is that, of course, in some areas the CPS already has the rights of audience it seeks elsewhere. In the West Country, burglaries committed on one side of the River Tamar — in Cornwall — can be dealt with by an advocate employed by the CPS who has a right of audience in *Truro* Crown Court and exercises it. If the burglaries are committed on the other side of the river, in Plymouth, that privilege is not open to the CPS. Such is the current logic.

One should then turn to the issue of the CPS budget. There would be an enormous and immediate saving on the budget if it were able to be selective in the cases handed to counsel on the ground of need rather than because of a restrictive practice. That issue of the savings is usually skirted over delicately, one notices, by those proposing the continuation of the present system.

This country is unique in having a CPS that cannot exercise the normal rights of audience, common to most other such services elsewhere. It may have made sense for that to be the case at the initiation of the service but, now that it has established itself as well as improved its stature, the next step must surely beckon. It cannot seriously be suggested that for the next decade it should be locked into a system more akin to a prosecuting solicitors department than a CPS.

If nothing else, both the career structure of those employed in the service as well as those suffering from the budget constraints imposed by the present arrangements deserve better. For whatever else may be the case, to use employed lawyers as advocates, in the higher courts will, inevitably, produce greater savings and therefore a more effective use of whatever budget is, or is likely to be, available.

That is not to say that there should not be a mix. Continued use of advocates from outside the CPS will always be a feature. In that way, the service obtains the best of both worlds. What is now needed is rational argument of the benefits and drawbacks of change as well as a realisation that the status quo cannot continue for very much longer.

The author is senior partner of Font & Bowden, solicitors.



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Memoir of a legend

THE LATE Lord Devlin is considered one of the greatest judges of his time. He died aged 86 in 1992 before finishing his autobiography. But his account of his early years at the Bar before he became a QC has now been published. Taken at the Flood (Tavener Publications, £11 hardback, incl. p&p) makes a compelling read.

It contains tributes from Cardinal Hume, Sir Ludovic Kennedy and Lord Scarman, who together worked to rectify the wrongful convictions of the Guildford Four and McGuire Seven. The book should encourage students battling for a place at the Bar. Devlin himself had a difficult start and nearly gave up. He managed to obtain an apprenticeship with Withers & Co. then



Lord Devlin: one of the greats

was chosen to "devil" for William Jowitt, the Attorney-General, joining his Brick Court chambers. Devlin first came to public notice as junior counsel in a famous murder case.

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subjects, according to Quarry Douglas's latest survey. Banking and finance, corporate and property are the areas drawing the highest salaries.

Opening the book

THE 1997 edition of *Passport*, the award-winning pocket guide to the law for young people, will be launched on Thursday by the Citizenship Foundation. "Ignorance of the law," the charity says, "is widespread. For many people, particularly the young, the law is a closed book — to be used not by them but against them."

The book gives practical guidance on the law in every area of life encountered by young people, from drugs to

driving and police powers to part-time work.

A free copy has gone to every secondary school and sixth-form college in England and Wales. Price: 99p for bulk orders. Details: Tony Thorpe, editor, 01777 700220.

Objections

THE long-running battle over the use of two lawyers in court goes on. In the latest move, the Lord Chancellor's Department is about to finalise legal aid regulations to restrict attendance by defence solicitors on defence counsel in Crown Court hearings. The regulations will cover simple trials or hearings.

Douglas Day, QC, of the Bar Council, says the regulations are being brought in despite objections from the Bar Council, the Council of Circuit Judges and the Chief Taxing Master.

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The Legal 500, The Clients' Guide to UK Law Firms, 1996.

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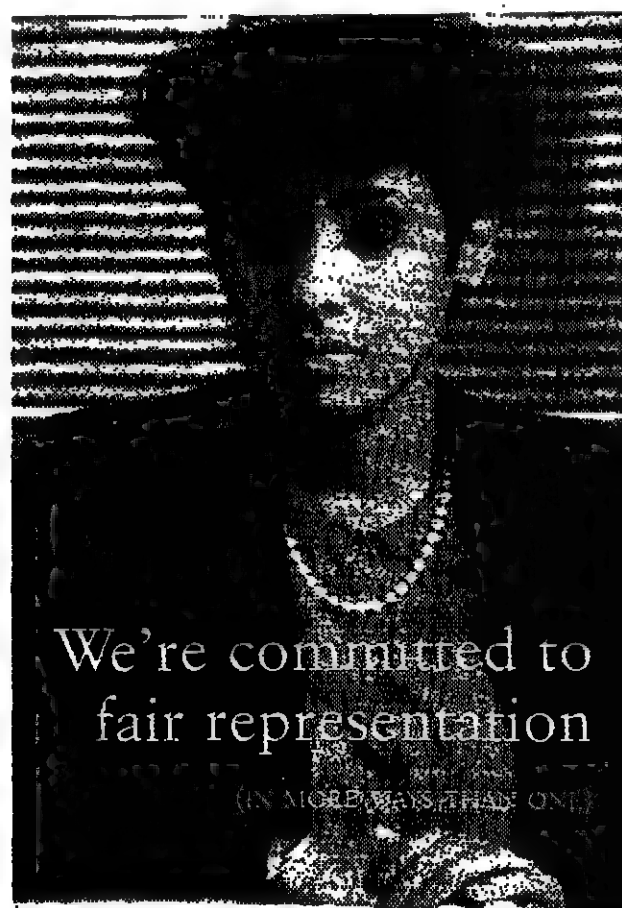
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James Morton dips into a potpourri of porridge talk (left), rich in modern drug terms, and (below) enjoys some legal fiction

In the words of the prisoner...

Several years ago, when I was starting to undertake criminal cases, I asked a client about his alibi. "Going case, wasn't it?" he replied. I looked sheepish and asked what it meant. He looked at me as though I was a country cousin and replied: "Going case... going case with a mystery?"

Going case comes from old slang for a brothel and is to sleep with a girl, and a mystery is a girl, possibly though not conclusively from the phrase "It's a mystery how she's still a virgin". Another suggestion is that "mystery" is rhyming slang and comes from the old radio show that featured a "mystery word". The rhyming slang would follow with word rhyming with bird and the actual rhyme being dropped.

Though neither "going case" nor "mystery" actually appear in Angela Devlin's *Prison Patter* (Water-side Press, £13.50), the other 2,500 entries should prevent young solicitors, magistrates, probation officers and even magistrates from asking questions that disrupt the narrative. (I once saw a magistrate bemused by a defendant who asked to "go for a Jimmy".)

The blurb claims, incorrectly, that the book is the first dictionary of words and slang from prisons. The first, *Lags Lexicon*, was in fact published some years ago. In the late 1980s, if I may mention it immodestly, my book *Lowspeak* covered much the same ground. Of

course, prison slang, just like ordinary slang, has changed over the years and now much of the book is devoted to the names of various types of drugs and drug-taking, something almost completely absent from the *Lags Lexicon*. Even the definitions appear to have changed. Of course, slang, particularly criminal slang, is a living language. For example, "Mary Jane" used to be marijuana but is now rhyming slang for cocaine. This directory of drug slang is, perhaps, the most useful function of the book.

For the general reader or a lawyer who does not simply want to use the book as a reference, there are annoying inconsistencies. Much of the fun of such a compilation is discovering how words and phrases came into use. Here, sometimes only partial explanations and definitions are given. "Brief" is listed as a lawyer, especially a barrister, and a search warrant. It also means both a cheque and a driving licence. In the case of "hooker" meaning prostitute, it is now more accepted that the word comes from the solicitation of the client or even the area of New York in which 19th-century prostitution flourished than from the eponymous American Civil War general suggested by Ms Devlin. Some origins are explained; others not. Partridge's *Dictionary of the Underworld* has not been updated for some years. Perhaps the time is ripe for a new dictionary.



"Cell Spin", slang for a surprise cell search. The cartoon, from *Prison Patter*, is by a former prisoner

Let this new heroine live

Once it was impossible to find a crime novel with authentic courtroom details. American and, to their shame, English writers believed that in this country judges ask counsel to "approach the bench". Usually, the Byzantine American criminal justice system was beyond novelists' understanding. Things have changed, thanks to courtroom TV and writers such as Scott Turow, Jonathan Davies (British) and Steve Martini (American). The last two are trial lawyers and each has produced a thriller based on the all-too-often correct premise that the prosecution does not disclose its hand to the defence as it should.

In *Undisclosed Material* (Coronet, £5.99) Jonathan Davies, a barrister and judge, reintroduces Jeremy Scott, hero of his first novel. This time, Scott is embroiled with Jolyon Scribner, a judge who is keen to ensure not only that the defendants are found guilty, but also that in cases using informants, these witnesses are protected in every possible way. Little by little, Scott finds that the judge is probably being over-zealous and, indeed, has potentially unhealthy links with the officer in two seemingly unrelated cases.

In Steve Martini's *The Judge* (Headline, £5.99), the latest in his series, Armando Acosta, the judge who has clashed over the years in novels with the defence lawyer Paul Madriani, starts in fine form, conducting an inquiry into the funds of a police union. Soon, things become unpleasant. Judge Acosta is accused of soliciting an undercover policewoman for prostitution.

In recent years, American courtroom thrillers have tended to

depart from reality, with district attorneys defending their sons and cross-examining their other children, but Martini has a good explanation of why Judge Acosta should end up being defended by Madriani after the woman is found beaten to death in her flat.

Madriani is assisted by the broken-down lawyer Harry Hinds and hindered by Leonore Goya, formerly of the district attorney's office. Scott is helped by Catherine, an American and one of the army of part-time clerks used by lawyers to sit behind counsel in criminal trials. In both novels, the heroes come into possession of evidence withheld by police and court, and it is instructive to see how each deals with the problem. Publishers have decided that courtroom scenes are not in themselves sufficient to sell books and that there must be some sort of chase sequence. Scott goes to Wales; Madriani and Leonore take a walk through the old courtroom.

These novels are at their best when the heroes are locked in procedure and cross-examination. There is a fine sequence in *The Judge* when a child witness is examined; and Davies has already shown that he has a good ear for the nuances of a testy Crown Court judge going nowhere.

As with Davies's first book, there is, for legal London, the added enjoyment in *Undisclosed Material* of unlocking the roman-d-claf. The next problem for Martini will be the conflict of interest which may arise from Madriani appearing in front of the judge who has been his client. For Davies, it is that Catherine is all too engaging and spunky a heroine to be dumped in the next book.

James Morton is editor of *New Law Journal*.

Healing the heartbreak at tinsel time

MOST PEOPLE would say that the festive season is a time for families. It conjures up pictures of open log fires, children playing around the Christmas tree, roasting chestnuts and, of course, the Christmas spirit. But there are many for whom this period is a painful and isolated time of year, when families simply cannot be close.

For divorcees with children, the festive season can be the loneliest time of the year, because one or other partner has to be without the children. But all

parties are suffering. One parent is lonely, the other feels guilty and the children are going through emotional pressure and a painful separation. And in the aftermath, matrimonial lawyers throughout Britain experience a surge of inquiries about divorce. So what about a different, positive approach to the holiday next year?

Our firm advises couples on practical ways to cope with the problems the season can bring. People have to accept that there can never be another traditional Christmas once divorce has happened. The easiest way to cope is to accept the situation and to find new ways in which to celebrate. One option is for divorced couples to

arrange mutually convenient dates for giving the children a second or alternative Christmas. Our family did this one year when we wanted to go skiing. We picked a weekend close to Christmas and made Friday evening Christmas Eve, Saturday Christmas Day and Sunday Boxing Day. It was a great success. Many people now go away for

"turkey and tinsel" weekends and are used to the idea. In later years, after divorcing, we have adopted the same philosophy - so that the children could see their father over Christmas and so that we could still have a Christmas together as a family. Our firm believes in the "holistic" approach to divorce: it also offers tailor-

made counselling sessions for clients, as well as for their children.

So next year, think about an alternative celebration. It saves a lot of problems, moving children on Christmas and Boxing Day and the feeling of breaking up the event, which occurs when children go off to visit absent parents.

DIANE BENUSSI

The author is founder of Benussi & Co., of Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands.

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This month's Current Legal Information. Everything from banning deer hunting to 'snowball schemes'

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Spanish inquisition turns full force on British mentors

The pain in Spain falls mainly on Brits in exile. Bobby Robson and John Toshack, the managers of Barcelona and Deportivo La Coruña, respectively, met at the Nou Camp on Saturday and, though Robson's side won with a late deflected goal, they were both pilloried as a malign influence on the Spanish game. Indeed Spanish culture, by the influential press.

Ronaldo, Ronaldo and Ronaldo. Sergio, Amunike, Djork. did not produce a single gram of football. "El País, the Barcelona daily, said, "Seen as an aim of science, that result, doubtless unachievable by biologists of the Pasteur Institute, was faithfully achieved by two farmhands from the British Museum."

In the very week when the English FA is restructuring its coaching emphasis, from schoolboy to senior level, our representatives abroad are condemned as being pollutants on Spanish football and on the Brazilians, Africans and East Europeans therein. The outpouring followed the match in Coruña, where not even an apparently inspired substitution, the introduction of Juan Pizzi, the Argentine international, to claim Barcelona's winning goal, could spare Robson the defilement of his Spanish honeymoon.

Doubtless even more hurtful to this 64-year-old enthusiast was the alleged criticism by Ronaldo, the Brazilian he took from Holland to Barcelona. Ronaldo, having grown from a youth into something of a god in his four months under Robson's wing, apparently stated that he finds it difficult to play under Robson's coaching style. How very sad, for it seems barely five minutes ago that there seemed to exist a special harmony, the respect of pupil to teacher, between the 20-year-old Brazilian and the fatherly Englishman.

Robson should worry. When the Catalan media turns its face against the coach of

ROB HUGHES



Overseas View

Barcelona, there is a complete cessation of rules and respect for human feeling. Much worse than that in England, where Robson's hair seemed to turn white overnight while being castigated as the national team manager.

Pizzi's goal, in the 87th minute on Saturday, was a deflection, and a wicked one at that, but by then Barcelona had deserved to be comfortably ahead in a barren, ugly game. One wonders how critical young Ronaldo would have been had his two superb shots not struck the goalposts, or had another shot from him not been saved on the goal line.

Ronaldo, worn by constant demands of club and country on a still growing physique, had scored 17 times in his first dozen games for Barcelona; now, in a "drought" that has spanned five games, the world's highest paid footballer is turning on his mentor.

Sad, but Toshack, whose first defeat of the season this was, feels more wretched still. "I will not continue at Deportivo, whatever happens," he said amid the rain of Saturday. "With or without titles, I will not stay." Toshack, criticised because his methods are so ultra-defensive, is seen as failing his inheritance from the popular previous coach, Arsénio

legias. "The supporters have

always looked down on my work," Toshack said.

That work, which has seen nine goals conceded in 18 league games, sometimes has edges of brutal pragmatism. There was a moment on the touchline on Saturday when two Coruña players tackled, if that is the word, Sergi, the Barcelona defender. One took his legs from behind, the other put a knee where it hurts most.

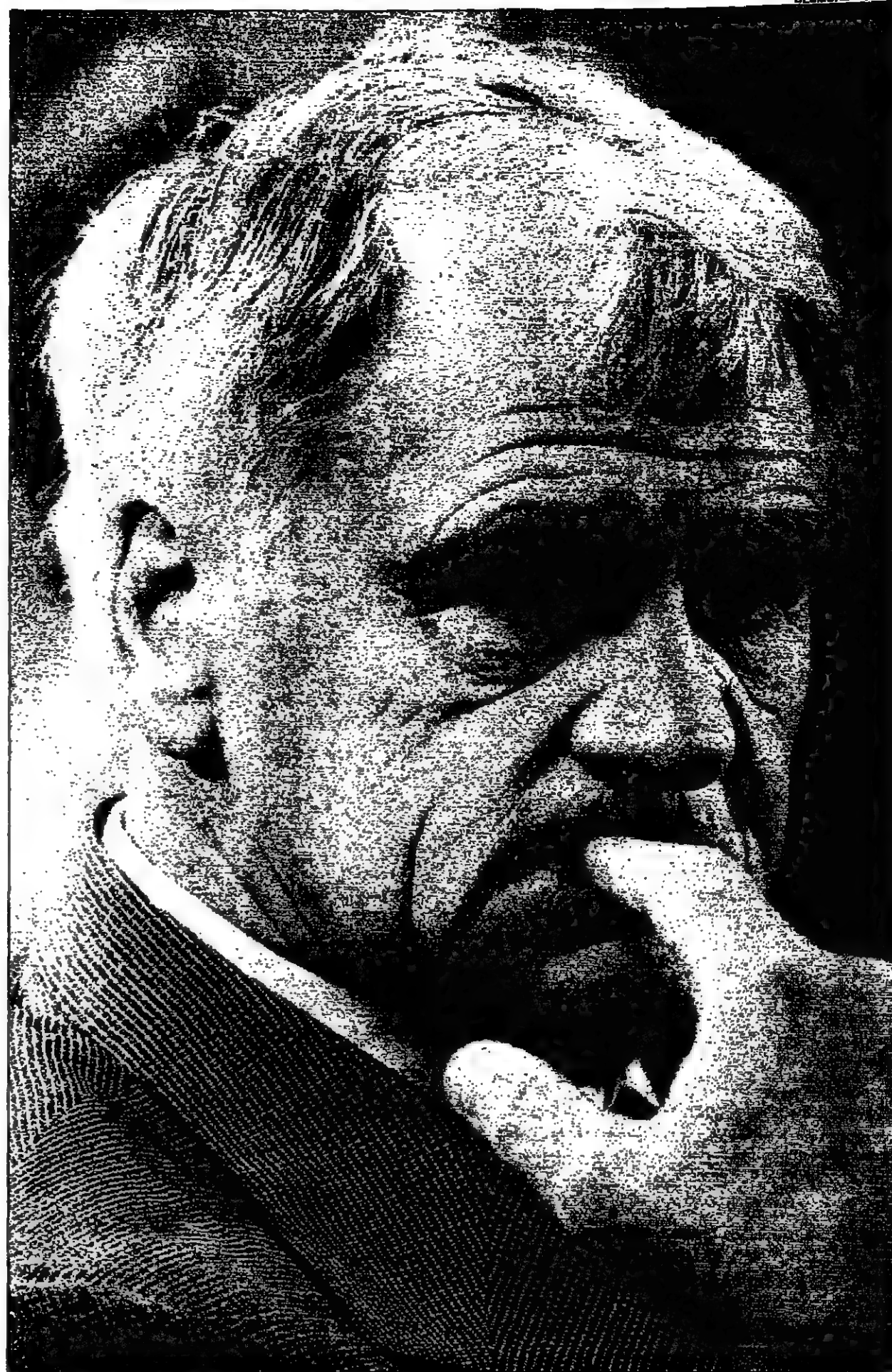
Toshack, almost a veteran of the Spanish game after two periods managing Real Sociedad and one at Real Madrid, is blamed for the thuggery of players. Robson, is chastised for something else.

His protégé, Ronaldo, had characteristically burst into the penalty area, past two flailing tackles, the second of which caught his heel, but he stayed on his feet and the ball ran away from him. The television cameras turned to Robson. He looked furious; he gesticulated a diving motion.

"Hey! But you are English," the headline in As, the sports daily, read yesterday. How could it be the writer asked, that a Brazilian should practise the purest fair play, and an Englishman should demand of him the opposite?

The English abroad, at least one of them, Roy Hodgson, had a Sunday celebration when his team, Internazionale, beat AS Roma 3-1 in Serie A of the Italian league. An acrobatic goal from Yuri Djorkaeff, Inter's France international, brought a standing ovation at the San Siro. Meanwhile, AC Milan were sinking swiftly.

Arrigo Sacchi, the manager, in his first month after his predecessor was dismissed, has lost the European Champions' League decider, has been beaten twice in the league and had pre-empted the 3-0 surrender against Lazio on Sunday by questioning the spirit and skill of his team. With such faith from their coach, not even the inducement of £35,000 per man to finish runners-up seems to inspire the Milanese.



As well as enduring scathing comments from the Spanish press, Robson been criticised by Ronaldo, his leading player

SKIING

Sparkling Sykora powers to third win

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

THOMAS SYKORA, of Austria, continued his domination of the slalom with his third World Cup victory of the season in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia, yesterday.

Sykora produced an excellent second run, despite almost crashing out several times, to register a winning aggregate time of 1min 41.92sec. He has now won three of the four slaloms this winter and finished second in the other.

Sebastian Amiez, the World Cup slalom title-holder, was second in 1min 42.29sec, his best result of the season, Thomas Stangassinger, of Austria, the 1994 Olympic champion, led after the first descent but fell back to third with an aggregate time of 1min 42.34sec, while Alberto Tomba, the world champion, finished eighth.

Primoz Peterka, 17, became the first Slovenian to clinch the coveted four hills title when he finished third in the final event in Bischofshofen, Austria, yesterday.

Peterka earned 971.5pts from the four jumps to finish clear of Andreas Goldberger, of Austria, who was second with 943.2, 0.1pt ahead of Dieter Thoma, of Germany. Thoma won the Bischofshofen leg with jumps of 124.5 and 126 metres. Peterka leads the World Cup table with 632 points, ahead of Thoma (540) and Goldberger (514).

SQUASH

Willstrop flies flag for Britain

JAMES WILLSTROP, of Yorkshire, was the only Briton to win a title in the Commercial Union British junior open championship, when he beat Yasser El Hady, of Egypt, 9-4, 9-2, 9-1, in the under-14 final in Sheffield yesterday.

The girls' under-16 championship went to Spain when Elisabet Sado defeated Leong Siu Lynn, of Malaysia, 9-5, 9-2, 9-4 in 29 minutes and the girls' under-14 championship went to Malaysia when the diminutive Nabil David beat Ommya Kawi, of Egypt, 9-1, 10-8, 9-3 in 25 minutes.

Willstrop's lone survival from six British semi-finalists was a disappointment after the way that England won the world junior team title last July.

Already standing more than 6ft, Willstrop, 13, from Pontefract, has long promised at least a bright junior career and this first triumph on the international scene was achieved with enough skill and understanding to suggest that he will make a mark at senior level.

Willstrop, however, needed all his disciplined straight driving and careful volleys to conquer the dynamic challenge of El Hady, a much smaller opponent.

Souness pitches back into battle

By DAVID MADDOCK

GRAEME SOUNESS, the Southampton manager, has already experienced one unseasonably early cup competition this year on a less than perfect surface. Now his side faces the prospect of another.

Stockport County were at pains yesterday to emphasise that their Coca-Cola Cup quarter-final, against Southampton this evening, will go ahead despite the continuing cold weather, which yesterday claimed the other quarter-final scheduled for tonight, between Ipswich Town and Leicester City.

That tie has been rearranged for January 21, but Stockport are confident of beating the freeze at their Edgeley Park ground. "We have had a slight thaw and, if the conditions don't get worse, the game will go ahead," Gary Glendon, the club secretary, said.

After Southampton's 3-1 third-

round FA Cup exit after a Reading on Saturday, when they had two players sent off, Souness was understandably keen yesterday to look forward, rather than back.

"I have told the players that the pitch at Stockport will be even worse," Souness said. "Reading is now a thing of the past and we have a great chance to get to the semi-finals. If I was the Stockport manager, I would be telling my players that Southampton don't fancy this match one little bit; but he would be wrong."

Souness, who considered Reading's pitch at Elm Park unplayable, faces a Football Association inquiry over his comments regarding Graham Hill, the referee.

Even on a perfect playing surface, Southampton could have expected a searching examination from Stockport, who are lying fifth in the

Nationwide League second division and have already disposed of two FA Carling Premiership sides - Blackburn Rovers and West Ham United - this season.

Brendan Elwood, the Stockport chairman, believes that Souness will face another difficult evening. "I think he might be red-faced again, but with embarrassment, not anger," he said. "We feel very confident for this tie and I think we will give Southampton a run for their money. There is not a team that we fear after our exploits this season."

Elwood is hoping for a victory that will put his club into a lucrative semi-final. "Obviously, at this level, a decent cup run is a real bonus financially," he said. "We can earn more from a cup run than we can through the gates all season. It helps to secure the future of the club."

Bolton keen to sign Warhurst

By DAVID MADDOCK

PAUL WARHURST will this morning tell Bolton Wanderers if he will join them on loan.

Warhurst, the Blackburn Rovers forward, has had offers from Bolton, the Nationwide first division leaders, and Manchester City, and today must decide between the two.

Warhurst, an England B international, is likely to join Bolton because they are interested in making the one-month loan period a more permanent affair. Colin Todd, the Bolton manager, will first want evidence to suggest that the player has completely recovered from a series of severe injuries.

If Warhurst performs well over the month, then Bolton will meet Blackburn's asking price of £15 million.

A flu epidemic has swept through Burnley Park and Bolton could be without John McGinlay, Nathan

Blake, Gerry Taggart and David Lee for the Coca-Cola Cup quarter-final home tie against Wimbledon tomorrow. They all missed training yesterday.

Frank Clark, the Manchester City manager, looks likely to bring in his first new players this week, when he returns to Nottingham Forest, his former club, for Des Lytle and Tommy Wright, the reserve team goalkeeper.

Clark has agreed to swap Nigel Clough for the pair and the move could be completed at the end of the week.

Ray Wilkins has returned to England to team up with Millwall, of the second division, on a one-month playing contract, just a day after leaving Hibernian, Wilkins, 40, left Easter Road by mutual consent in the wake of the 2-1 defeat by Rangers on Saturday after

almost four months on short-term contracts.

The BBC has picked the game between Chelsea and Liverpool at Stamford Bridge for its live FA Cup fourth-round action. Liverpool, the beaten finalists last year, travel to London aiming for swift revenge for their New Year's Day league defeat at the hands of Roud Gollis's men, and the tie has been moved to January 26, kicking off at 4.10pm. Sky TV, which showed the 1-1 draw between Charlton Athletic and Newcastle United at The Valley on Sunday, will stick with the winners of that tie for the fourth round home game against Nottingham Forest.

Sunderland will complete the £250,000 signing of Jan Eriksson, the Sweden international defender, today subject to him passing a medical.

FOR THE RECORD

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

NATIONAL LEAGUE (NFL) Play-offs: Pittsburgh 33, Cincinnati 20. New York Jets 20, Buffalo Bills 17.

BASKETBALL

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA) LA Lakers 99, San Antonio 84. Boston 109, Phoenix 102. New York Knicks 101, Sacramento 97. Philadelphia 108, LA Lakers 95. Vancouver 81.

BOWLS

BOWLS LEAGUE: Chester 92, Crystal Palace 78. London Towers 91, London 76.

CRICKET

SHEFFIELD SHIELD final day of 17-18. Lancashire 145, Yorkshire 115. Lancashire 145, Yorkshire 115.

FOOTBALL

PREMIER LEAGUE: Arsenal 2, Manchester United 1. Tottenham 2, Liverpool 1.

POOLS FORECAST

Saturday January 11. 17 Reading v. Cheltenham. 18 Reading v. Cheltenham.

FOOTBALL

PREMIER LEAGUE: Arsenal 2, Manchester United 1. Tottenham 2, Liverpool 1.

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FOOTBALL

PREMIER LEAGUE: Arsenal 2, Manchester United 1. Tottenham 2, Liverpool 1.

BOWLS

WELSH UNDER-21S SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP: Final. W Phillips (Cardiff) vs R Daniel (Ogwen) 21-12.

CRICKET

ST MORTIZ: Chris Riddell 100, 100. 100. 100. 100.

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ICE HOCKEY

NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL) Buffalo 5, Phoenix 3. St Louis 5, New Jersey 3.

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NORDIC SKIING

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11.30 Authors and Gardens. Simon
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the Last Gardens of Helgö (G)
12.00 News 12.30s: The Little
Book: Through the Looking
Glass (7/10)
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